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REV^D W. ROMAINE A.M.

PUBLISHED BY WILLIAM COLLINS GLASGOW

TREATISES

ON THE

LIFE, WALK, AND TRIUMPH

OF

FAITH.

BY THE

REV. W. ROMAINE, A.M.

WITH

AN INTRODUCTORY ESSAY,

BY

THOMAS CHALMERS, D.D.

PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH.

FOURTH EDITION.

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INTRODUCTORY ESSAY.

THERE is nothing of which some readers of religious books complain more grievously, than that they should be exposed to a constant and wearisome reiteration of the same truths; than that the appetite of the mind for variety should be left to the pain of its own unsated cravings, through the never-failing presentation of some one idea, wherewith, perhaps, it has long ago been palled and nauseated; than that, what they already know should yet again and again be told them—so as to subject their attention to topics that have become tasteless and threadbare, and their minds to a monotony of ideas, that may, at length, be felt to be quite insupportable. This objection has sometimes been urged against Mr. ROMAINE'S excellent Treatises on FAITH; and that, precious and important as they acknowledge the truths to be on which he unceasingly delights to expatiate, yet, they consider the frequency of their recurrence has a tendency to produce in the mind a feeling, if not of weariness, at least of unnecessary repetition.

Now, Paul himself admitted, that to write the same things was not grievous to himself, however

grievous it may have been felt by those whom he was in the habit of addressing. And, lest they should have felt his repetitions to be matter of offence or of annoyance, he tries to reconcile them to these repetitions, by affirming, that whether they were agreeable or not, at least they were safe. "To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe."

A process of reasoning gives a most agreeable play and exercise to the faculties. Yet how soon would such a process, if often repeated, feel stale to the intellectual taste. Even the pleasure we had at the first, from the important, and, perhaps, unexpected result to which it had conducted us, would speedily wear off. It would, of course, instantly cease to be unexpected: and as to its importance, we know that this is a property of such truths as are most familiar and most generally recognised: and these, of all others, are least fitted to stimulate the mere understanding. Like the element of water, they may be the most valuable, yet least prized truths by us: and certain it is, that by the unvarying announcement of them, they would, at length, fall in downright bluntness and insipidity on the ear of the inner man. It is thus that a train of argument, the mere object of which is to gain the conviction of the understanding, does not admit of being repeated indefinitely. After having once carried the conviction, it ceases to be any longer needful—and as to the recreation which is thereby afforded to the intellectual powers, nothing is more certain, than that the enjoyment would speedily decay, should the very same reasoning, and the very same truths, be often presented to the notice

of the mind, so as, at length, to flatten into a thing of such utter listlessness, that no one pleasure could be given, and no one power could be awakened by it.

And what is true of a train of argument addressed to the reason, is also true of those images and illustrations which are addressed to the fancy. Whatever delight may have been felt at the original presentation of them, would rapidly subside were they ever and anon to be obtruded on the view. We know of nothing more exquisite than the sensation that is felt when the light of some unexpected analogy, or of some apt and beautiful similitude makes its first entry into the mind. And yet there is a limit to the enjoyment—nor would the attempt to ply the imagination at frequent intervals with one and the same picture be long endured. The welcome which it found from its own intrinsic loveliness, was enhanced by the charm of novelty; but when that charm is dissipated, then is it possible, that, by the mere force of repetition, the taste may decline into languor, or even into loathing. Both the reason and the fancy of man must have variety to feed upon; and, wanting this, the constant reiteration of the same principles, and the constant recital of the same poetry, would indeed be grievous.

Yet are there certain appetites of the minc [illegible] have no such demand for variety. It is n[illegible]h the affections, or the moral feelings, as it is [illegible]th other principles of our nature. The desire of companionship, for example, may find its abundant and full gratification in the society of a very few friends. And often may it happen of an individual, that his presence never tires—that his smile is the sunshine

of a perpetual gladness to the heart—that in his looks and accents of kindness, there is a charm that is perennial and unfading—that the utterance of his name is at all times pleasing to the ear; and the thought of his worth or friendship is felt as a cordial, by the hourly and habitual ministration of which the soul is upheld. The man who expatiates on his virtues, or who demonstrates to you the sincerity of his regards, or who refreshes your memory with such instances of his fidelity, as indeed you had not forgotten, but which still you love to be retold—it is but one theme or one topic in which he indulges; and often will he retail in your hearing what substantially are the same things,—yet are they not grievous.

And the tale of another's friendly and favourable inclination to you will not merely bear to be often repeated, because in the conscious possession of friendship there is a perpetual enjoyment, but also because there is in it a constant preservative, and a charm against the discomfort to which a mind, when left to other influences, or to itself, might else be liable. When the heart is desolated by affliction, or harassed with care, or aggrieved by injustice and calumny, or even burdened under the weight of a solitude which it feels to be a weariness, who would ever think of apprehending lest the daily visit of your best friend should be grievous, because it was the daily application of the same thing? Would not you, in these circumstances, fondly cling to his person, or, if at a distance, would not your heart as fondly cling to the remembrance of him? Would not you be glad to bear up the downward and the desponding tendencies of the heart, by the thought

of that unalterable affection, which survived the wreck of your other earthly hopes, and earthly interests? Would not you feel it a service, if any acquaintance of yours were to conduct him in person to your chamber; and there to bring upon you the very smiles that a thousand times before had gladdened your bosom, and the very accents of tenderness that had often, in days which are past, soothed and tranquillized you? Or, if he cannot make him present to you in person, is not a service still rendered, if he make him present to your thoughts? You have no doubt of the alleged friendship, but nature is forgetful, and, for the time being, it may not be adverting to that truth which, of all others, is most fitted to pacify and to console it. The memory needs to be awakened to it. The belief of it may never have been extinguished; but the conception of it may be absent from the mind, and for the purpose of recalling it, the voice of a remembrancer may be necessary. It is thus that the opportune suggestion of a truth, which has long been known, and often repeated, may still the tumults of an agitated spirit, and cause light to arise out of darkness. And who can object to sameness, and to reiteration, in such a case as this? The same position brought forward again and again, for the mere didactic purpose to convince or to inform, might, however important, soon cease to interest the understanding; and the same image, however beautiful, might, if often presented, soon cease to interest or to affect the fancy—but the affirmation of a friendship that is dear to your heart, may be repeated as often as is necessary to raise and *to prolong* the sense of it

within you—and, although the theme of every day, still, instead of being grievous on that account, may it be felt like the renewed application of balsam to the soul, with as lively a sense of enjoyment as before, and with a delight that is utterly inexhaustible.

The same holds true of a moral principle. The announcement of it needs not to be repeated with a view to inform; but it may be repeated with a view to influence, and that on every occurrence of temptation or necessity. Were it our only business with virtue to learn what it is, it were superfluous to be told oftener than once, that anger degrades and discomposes him who is carried away by it, and ought to be resisted as alike a violation of duty and of dignity. But as our main business with virtue is to practise it, the very same thing of which by one utterance we have been sufficiently informed, might be often uttered, with propriety and effect, in order that we should be reminded of it. And, accordingly, in some hour of great and sudden provocation, when another's fraud, or another's ingratitude would take full possession of the feelings, and shut out from the mind's regard every element that had influence to still or to arrest the coming storm, were it not well, if some friendly monitor were standing by, and bidding him be calm? There might not, in the whole of the remonstrance, be one consideration employed, which has not often been recognised, nor one principle urged, which has not been admitted, long ago, into his ethical system, and is perfectly familiar to his understanding, as a sound principle of human conduct. Yet it is not superfluous again to urge it *upon* him. A practical object is gained by this

timely suggestion—and it is the highest function of practical wisdom, not to devise what is new, but seasonably to recall what is old. When, in the heat and the hurry of some brooding fermentation, there is one intense feeling that has taken exclusive occupation of the soul, it is well that some counteractive influence might be poured in, which shall assuage its violence. And this influence, generally, lies not with new truths which are then for the first time apprehended, but with old truths which are then brought to the remembrance. So that, while for the author to repeat the same things is not grievous, for the reader it may be safe.

The doctrine of Jesus Christ and him crucified, which forms the principal and pervading theme in the following Treatises, possesses a prominent claim to a place in our habitual recollections. And, for this purpose, ought it to be the topic of frequent reiteration by every Christian author; and it may well form the staple of many a Christian treatise, and be the leading and oft-repeated argument of many a religious conversation. It is this which ushers into the mind of a sinner the sense of God as his Friend and his reconciled Father. That mind, which is so apt to be overborne by this world's engrossments—or to lapse into the dread and distrust of a conscious offender—or to go back again to nature's lethargy, and nature's alienation—or to lose itself in quest of a righteousness of its own, by which it might challenge the reward of a blissful eternity,—stands in need of a daily visitor who, by his presence, might dissipate the gloom, or clear away the perplexity, in which these strong and practical tendencies

of the human constitution are so ready to involve it. There is with man an obstinate forgetfulness of God; so that the Being who made him is habitually away from his thoughts. That he may again be brought nigh, there must be an open door of entry by which the mind of man can welcome the idea of God, and willingly entertain it; by which the imagination of Deity might become supportable, and even pleasing to the soul: so that, when present to our remembrance, there should be the felt presence of one who loves and is at peace with us. Now, it is only by the doctrine of the cross that man can thus delight himself in God, and, at the same time, be free from delusion. This is the way of access for man entering into friendship with God, and for the thought of God, as a Friend, entering into the heart of man. And thus it is, that the sound of his Saviour's love carries with it such a fresh and unfailing charm to a believer's ear. It is the precursor to an act of mental fellowship with God, and is hailed as the sound of the approaching footsteps of Him whom you know to be your Friend.

When the mind, abandoned to itself, takes its own spontaneous and undirected way, it is sure to wander from God; and hence, if without effort, and without watchfulness, will it lapse into a state of insensibility in regard to him. While in the corrupt and earthly frame of our present tabernacle, there is a constant gravitation of the heart towards ungodliness; and, against this tendency, there needs to be applied the counterpoise of such a force as shall either act without intermission, or by frequent and repeated *impulses*. The belief that God is your Friend in

Christ Jesus, is just the restorative, by which the soul is brought back again from the lethargy into which it had fallen; and the great preservative by which it is upheld from sinking anew into the depths of its natural alienation. It is by cherishing this belief, and by a constant recurrence of the mind to that great truth which is the object of it, that a sense of reconciliation, or the felt nearness of God as your Friend, is kept up in the bosom. And if the mind will not, by its own energies, constantly recur to the truth, it is good that the truth should be frequently obtruded on the notice of the mind. "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice." If there be an aptitude in man, which undoubtedly there is, to let slip the things that belong to his peace, it is good to be ever and anon presenting these things to his view, and bidding him give earnest heed unto them. It is not that his judgment would be thereby informed, nor that his imagination would be thereby regaled, but that his memory would be awakened, and his practical tendency to forget or fall asleep unto these things would be thereby made head against. And thus there are certain things, the constant repetition of which, by Christian writers, ought not to be thought grievous, and at all events is safe.

And there is a perpetual tendency in nature not only to forget God, but also to misconceive him. There is nothing more firmly interwoven with the moral constitutions of man than a legal spirit towards God, with its aspirings, and its jealousies, and its fears. Let the conscience be at all enlightened, and a sense of manifold deficiencies from the rule of perfect obedience is altogether unavoidable; and so there

is ever lurking in the recesses of our heart a dread and a misgiving about God—the secret apprehension of him as our enemy—a certain distrust of him, or feeling of precariousness; so that we have little comfort and little satisfaction while we entertain the thought of him. Were that a mere intellectual error by which we hold the favour of God to be a purchase with the righteousness of man, and so failing in the establishment of such a righteousness, we remained without hope in the world; or were that a mere intellectual error by which we continued blind to the offered righteousness of Christ, and so, declining the offer, kept our distance from the only ground on which God and man can walk in amity together; then, like any other error of the understanding, it might be done conclusively away by one statement or one demonstration. But when, instead of a fault in the judgment, which might thus be satisfied by a single announcement, it is a perverse constitutional bias that needs to be at all times plied against, by the operation of a contrary influence—then it might not be on the strength of one deliverance only, but by dint of its strenuous and repeated asseveration, that the sense of God as both a just God and a Saviour is upheld in the soul. This might just be the aliment by which the soul is kept from pining under a sense of its own poverty and nakedness—the bread of life which it receives by faith, and delights at all times to feed upon: and just as hunger does not refuse the same viands by which, a thousand times before, it has been met and satisfied, so may the doctrine of Christ crucified be that spi*ritual food* which is ever welcomed by the hungry *and heavy-laden* soul, and is ever felt to be precious.

The Bible supposes a tendency in man to let slip its truths from his recollection, and, in opposition to this, it bids him keep them in memory, else he might have believed them in vain. It is not enough that they may, at one time, have been received. They must be at all times remembered. "And therefore," says Peter, "I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them and be established in the present truth." To know and to be assured is not enough, it would appear. They may at one time have consented to the words which were spoken, but the apostle presented them anew, in order that they might be mindful of the words which were spoken. Those doctrines of religion which speak comfort, or have an attendant moral influence upon the soul, must at first be learned; but not, like many of the doctrines of science, consigned to a place of dormancy among the old and forgotten acquisitions of the understanding. They stand in place of a kind and valuable friend, of whom it is not enough that he has once been introduced to your acquaintance, but with whom you hold it precious to have daily fellowship, and to be in your habitual remembrance. And this is eminently true of that doctrine which is so frequently reiterated in these Treatises, "that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures." It is the portal through which the light of God's reconciled countenance is let in upon the soul. It is the visitor that ushers there the peace and glory of heaven, and, forcing its way through all those cold and heavy obstructions by which the legal spirit has beset the heart of *proud yet impotent* man—it is the

alone truth that can at once hush the fears of guilt, and command a reverence for the offended Sovereign. No wonder, then, that its presence should be so much courted by all who have been touched with the reality and the magnitude of eternal things—by all who have ever made the question of their acceptance with God a matter of earnest and home-felt application; and who, urged on the one hand, by the authority of a law that must be vindicated, and on the other, by the sense of a condemnation that, to the eye of nature, appears inextricable, must give supreme welcome to the message that can assure them of a way by which both God may be glorified and the sinner may be safe. It is the blood of Christ which resolves this mystery, and it is by the daily application of this blood to the conscience that peace is daily upheld there. When the propitiation by Christ is out of the mind, then, on the strength of its old propensities, does it lapse either into the forgetfulness of God, or into a fearful distrust of him. And therefore it is, that every aspiring Christian prizes every intimation, and every token of remembrance, by which to recall to his mind the thought of a crucified Saviour. And he no more quarrels with a perpetual sense of him who poured out his soul unto the death, than he would with the perpetual sunshine of a brilliant and exhilarating day: and just as a joy and a thankfulness are felt at every time when the sun breaks out from the clouds which lie scattered over the firmament—so is that beam of gladness which enters with the very name of Christ, when it finds its way through that dark and disturbed atmosphere which is ever apt to gather around

the soul. The light of beauty is not more constantly pleasant to the eye—the ointment that is poured forth not more constantly agreeable in its odour—the relished and wholesome food not more constantly palatable to the ever-recurring appetite of hunger—the benignant smile of tried and approved friendship not more constantly delicious to the heart of man, than is the sense of a Saviour's sufficiency to him of spiritual and new-born desires, who now hungers and thirsts after righteousness.

This may explain the untired and unexpended delight wherewith the Christian hangs upon a theme which sounds monotonously, and is felt to be wearisome by other men: and this is one test by which he may ascertain his spiritual condition. There is much associated with religion that is fitted to regale even a mind that is unrenewed, if open to the charms of a tasteful, or pathetic, or eloquent representation. And thus it is, that crowds may be drawn around a pulpit by the same lure of attraction which fills a theatre with raptured and applauding multitudes. To uphold the loveliness of the song, might the preacher draw on all the beauties of nature, while he propounds the argument of nature's God: nor need the deep, the solemn interest of tragedy be wanting, with such topics at command as the sinner's restless bed, and the dark imagery of guilt and vengeance wherewith it is surrounded: and again, may the fairest tints of heaven be employed to deck the perspective of a good man's anticipations; or the touching associations of home be pressed into the service of engaging all our sympathies, with the feelings, and the struggles, and the hopes of his pious family.

It is thus that the theological page may be richly strewed with the graces of poetry, and even the feast of intellect be spread before us by the able champions of theological truth. Yet all this delight would require novelty to sustain it, and be in full congeniality with minds on which the unction of living water from above had never yet descended. It is altogether diverse from that spiritual taste, by which the simple application of the cross to the sinner's conscience is felt and appreciated—by which the utterance of the Saviour's name is at all times welcomed like the sound of sweetest music—by which a sensation of relief enters, with all the power and freshness of a new feeling, so often as the conception of his atoning blood, and of his perfect righteousness, is made to visit us—by which the reiteration of his sacrifice upon the ear, has a like effect to disperse the habitual distrust or lethargy of nature, that the ever-recurring presence of a friend has to disperse the gloom of a constitutional melancholy. It is no evidence of his vital Christianity, that a man can enjoy a kindred recreation in those embellishments of genius or literature of which the theme is susceptible. But if its simple affirmations be sweet unto him—if the page be never lovelier in his eye than when gemmed with Bible quotations that are both weighty and pertinent—if when pervaded throughout by a reference to Christ, and to him crucified, it be felt and rejoiced in like the incense of a perpetual savour, and he, withal a son of learning and generous accomplishment, can love, even in its homeliest garb, the oft-repeated truth; and that, purely because the *balm* of Gilead is there,—this we should hold the

evidence of one who, so far at least, has been enlightened, and has tasted of the heavenly gift, and has been made a partaker of the Holy Ghost, and has tasted of the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come.

We know of no Treatises where this evangelical infusion so pervades the whole substance of them as those of ROMAINE. Though there is no train of consecutive argument—though there is no great power or variety of illustration—though we cannot allege in their behalf much richness of imagery, or even much depth of Christian experience. And, besides, though we were to take up any of his paragraphs at random, we should find that, with some little variation in the workmanship of each, there was mainly one ground or substratum for them all—yet the precious and consoling truths, which he ever and anon presents, must endear them to those who are anxious to maintain in their minds a rejoicing sense of God as their reconciled Father. He never ceases to make mention of Christ and of his righteousness—and it is by the constant droppings of this elixir that the whole charm and interest of his writings are upheld. With a man whose ambition and delight it was to master the difficulties of an argument; or with a man whose chief enjoyment it was to range at will over the domains of poetry, we can conceive nothing more tasteless or tame than these Treatises that are now offered to the public. Yet, in despite of that literary nakedness which they may exhibit to the eye of the natural man, who possesses no spiritual taste, and no spiritual discernment, let such a man have his eye opened to the hidden glories of

that theme, which, of all others, was dear to the bosom of their Author; and, whether from the press or from the pulpit, was the one theme on which he ever loved to expatiate—let the sense of guilt but fasten upon his conscience, and the sure but simple remedy of faith in the blood of Christ recommend itself as that power of God which alone is able to dissolve it—let him be made to feel the suitableness that there is between this precious application, and that inward disease of which the malignity and the soreness have now been revealed to him—then, like as it is at all times pleasing, when there is laid over a bodily wound the emollient that relieves it, so is it all times pleasing, whenever the spiritual malady is felt, to have recourse upon that unction by the sprinkling of which it is washed away. A feeling of joy in the Redeemer will be ever prompting to the same contemplations, and to the utterance of the same things. To a regenerated spirit, that never can be a weariness in time, which is to form the song of eternity.

But it is of importance to remark, that the theme on which Mr. Romaine so much loves to expatiate, is a purifying as well as a pleasing theme. It is not only not grievous to indulge in it, but, most assuredly, to every true-hearted Christian, it is safe. We are aware of the alleged danger which some entertain of the tendency of such a full and free exhibition of the grace of the gospel, to produce Antinomianism. But the way to avert this, is not by casting any part of gospel truth into the shade. It is to spread open the whole of it, and give to every one part the relief and the prominency that it has in

Scripture. We are not to mitigate the doctrines of a justifying faith, and an all-perfect righteousness, because of the abuse that has been made of them by hypocrites—but, leaving to these doctrines all their prominency, we are to place by their side the no less important and undeniable truths, that heaven is the abode of holy creatures, and that, ere we are qualified for admittance there, we must become holy and heavenly ourselves. Nor is there a likelier way of speeding this practical transformation upon our souls, than by keeping up there, through the blood of Christ, a peace in the conscience, which is never truly done, without a love in the heart being kept up along with it. Those who are justified by faith in the righteousness of Christ, and, in consequence of which, have that peace with God which this Author labours so earnestly to maintain in the mind, walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit: and that man's faith in the offered Saviour is not real, nor has he given a cordial acceptance to that grace which is so freely revealed in the gospel, if he do not demonstrate the existence of this faith in his heart, by its operation in his character. A hypocrite may pervert the grace of the gospel, as he will seek a shelter for his iniquities, wherever it can be found. But because he receives it deceitfully, this is no reason why it should be withheld from those who receive it in truth. The truths which he abuses to his own destruction, are, nevertheless, the very truths which serve to aliment the gratitude and the new obedience of every honest believer, who gives welcome acceptance to all things whatsoever that are

written in the book of God's counsel, and finds room enough in his moral system for both of the positions —that he is justified by faith, and that he is judged by works.

T. C.

Glasgow, September, 1822.

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THE

LIFE OF FAITH.

PREFACE

TO

THE LIFE OF FAITH.

THE design of this little Treatise is to display the glory and all-sufficiency of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to encourage weak believers to glorify him more, by depending and living more upon his all-sufficiency. Whatever grace he has promised in his word, he is faithful, and he is almighty to bestow, and they may receive it of him freely by the hand of faith. This is its use and office, as a hand or instrument, having first received Christ, to be continually receiving out of Christ's fulness. The apostle calls this "living by faith;" a life received and continued, with all the strength, comforts, and blessings belonging to it, by faith in the Son of God; and he also mentions the work of faith, its working effectually in the hearts and lives of believers, through Christ's strengthening them, and its growing in them, yea, growing exceedingly, from faith to faith, by the power of him who loveth them. This is the subject; and it properly belongs to those only who have obtained the true faith, given them of God, and wrought in their hearts by his word and Spirit. Such persons meet with many difficulties every day to try their faith, and to hinder them from depending continually upon the Lord Christ for all *things belonging* to life and

godliness. By what means these difficulties may be overcome, is plainly taught in Scripture, is clearly promised, and is attained by faith, which becomes daily more victorious, as it is enabled to trust that he is faithful who promised. The strengthening of it I have had all along in view, hoping to be the means, under God, of leading the weak believer by the hand, and of removing hinderances out of his way, until the Lord thoroughly settle and establish him in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

But I must admonish the reader, that I do not expect this merely from what I have written. It is too high and great a work for any mere man. Faith is the gift of God. And he alone who gives it, can increase it. The author of the faith is also the finisher of it; and we do not use the means to set the Lord of all means aside: no; we use them that we may find him in them. It is his presence which makes the use of them effectual. By this, and this only, can any reader of this little book be rendered stronger in faith. Being well assured of this, I have therefore looked up to him myself, and it will be for thy profit also, reader, to look up to him in prayer for his blessing. Entreat him, of his grace, to countenance this feeble attempt to promote his glory and his people's good. Beg of him to make thy reading of it the means of thy growth in faith, and to accompany it with the supply of his Holy Spirit to every believer into whose hands it may fall. And forget not, in thy prayers and praises, to remember the Author.

April 30, 1793.

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THE persons for whose use this little tract is drawn up, are supposed to be practically acquainted with these following truths:—They have been convinced of sin, and convinced of righteousness. The word of God has been made effectual, by the application of the Holy Spirit, to teach them the nature of the divine law; and upon comparing their hearts and their lives with it, they have been brought in guilty. They found themselves fallen creatures, and they felt the sad consequences of the fall; namely, total ignorance in the understanding of God and his ways, an open rebellion against him in the will, and an entire enmity in the heart; a life spent in the service of the world, the flesh, and the devil: and on all these accounts, guilty before God, and by nature children of wrath. When they were convinced of those truths in their judgments, and the awakened conscience sought for ease and deliverance, then they found they were helpless and without strength; they *could take no step, nor do any thing* which could in

the least save them from their sins. Whatever method they thought of, it failed them upon trial, and left conscience more uneasy than before. Did they purpose to repent?—they found such a repentance as God would be pleased with, was the gift of Christ. He was exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance. Suppose they thought of reforming their lives, yet what is to become of their old sins? Will present obedience, if it could be perfectly paid, make any atonement for past disobedience? Will the broken law take part of our duty for the whole? No: It has determined, that whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. And let him be ever so careful in doing what the law requires, or in avoiding what the law forbids; let him fast, and pray, and give alms; hear and read the word; be early and late at ordinances,—yet the enlightened conscience cannot be herewith satisfied: because, by these duties, he cannot undo the sin committed, and because he will find so many failings in them, that they will be still adding to his guilt, and increasing his misery.

What method then shall he take? The more he strives to make himself better, the worse he finds himself: he sees the pollution of sin greater; he discovers more of his guilt; he finds in himself a want of all good, and an inclination to all evil; he is now convinced that the law is holy, just, and good, but when he would keep it, evil is present with him. This makes him deeply sensible of his guilty, helpless state, and shows him, that by the works of the law he cannot be saved. His heart, like a fountain, is continually sending forth evil thoughts; yea, the

very imaginations of it are only and altogether evil, and words and works partake of the nature of that evil fountain from whence they flow; so that after all his efforts, he cannot quiet his conscience, nor obtain peace with God.

The law having done its office as a schoolmaster, by convincing him of these truths, stops his mouth, that he has not a word to say, why sentence should not be passed upon him. And there it leaves him, guilty and helpless. It can do nothing more for him, than show him that he is a child of wrath, and that he deserves to have the wrath of God abiding upon him for ever; for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

The gospel finds him in this condition, as the good Samaritan did the wounded traveller, and brings him good news. It discovers to him the way of salvation, contrived in the covenant of grace, and manifests to him what the ever-blessed Trinity had therein purposed, and what in the fulness of time was accomplished. That all the perfections of the Godhead might be infinitely and everlastingly glorified, the Father covenanted to gain honour and dignity to his law and justice, to his faithfulness and holiness, by insisting upon man's appearing at his bar in the perfect righteousness of the law. But man having no such righteousness of his own, all having sinned, and there being none righteous, no, not one! how can he be saved? The Lord Christ, a person in the Godhead, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father, undertook to be his Saviour; he covenanted to stand up as the head and surety of his people, in their nature and in their stead, to obey for them, that by his infinitely precious obedience many might be made

righteous, and to suffer for them, that by his everlasting meritorious stripes they might be healed. Accordingly, in the fulness of time, he came into the world, and was made flesh; and God and man being as truly united in one person, as the reasonable soul and flesh in one man, this adorable person lived, and suffered, and died, as the representative of his people. The righteousness of his life was to be their right and title to life, and the righteousness of his sufferings and death was to save them from all the sufferings due to their sins. And thus the law and justice of the Father would be glorified in pardoning them, and his faithfulness and holiness made honourable in saving them: he might be strictly just, and yet the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus.

In this covenant, the Holy Spirit, a person coequal and co-eternal with the Father and the Son, undertook the gracious office of quickening and convincing sinners in their consciences, how guilty they were, and how much they wanted a Saviour; and in their judgments, how able he was to save all that come unto God through him; and in their hearts to receive him, and to believe unto righteousness; and then in their walk and conversation, to live upon his grace and strength. His office is thus described by our blessed Lord, in John xvi. 13, 14. "When the Spirit of truth is come, he shall glorify me; for he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you:" that is, when he comes to convince sinners of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment, he takes of the things of Christ, and glorifies him by showing them what a fulness there is in him to save. He leads them into all necessary truth in their judg-

ments, both concerning their own sinfulness, guilt, and helplessness, and also concerning the almighty power of the God-man, and his lawful authority to make use of it for their salvation. He opens their understandings to comprehend the covenant of grace, and the offices of the eternal Trinity in this covenant, particularly the office of the sinner's surety, the Lord Christ; and he convinces them that there is righteousness and strength, comfort and rejoicing, grace for grace, holiness and glory, yea, treasures infinite, everlasting treasures of these in Christ; and hereby he draws out their affections after Christ, and enables them, with the heart, to believe in him unto righteousness. And the Holy Spirit, having thus brought them to the happy knowledge of their union with Christ, afterwards glorifies him in their walk and conversation, by teaching them how to live by faith upon his fulness, and to be continually receiving out of it grace for grace, according to their continual needs.

The corruption of our nature by the fall, and our recovery through Jesus Christ, are the two leading truths in the Christian religion, and I suppose the persons for whose sake this little tract is drawn up, not only to know them, but also to be established in them, steadfastly to believe, and deeply to experience them. The necessity of their being well grounded in them, is very evident; for a sinner will never seek after, nor desire Christ, farther than he feels his guilt and his misery; nor will he receive Christ by faith, till all other methods of saving himself fail; nor will he live upon Christ's fulness, farther than he has an abiding sense *of his* own want of him.

Reader, how do these truths appear to thee? Has the law of God arraigned thee in thy conscience? Hast thou been there brought in guilty, and has the Spirit of God deeply convinced thee by the law, of sin, and of unbelief, and of thy helplessness, so as to leave thee no false resting-place short of Christ? Has he swept away every refuge of lies? and thus put thee upon inquiring what thou must do to be saved? If not, may the Lord the Spirit convince thee, and in his own good time bring thee to the knowledge of thyself, and to the saving knowledge of and belief in Christ Jesus, without which this book can profit thee nothing. But if thou hast been thus convinced, and the Lord has shone into thy understanding, and enlightened it with the knowledge of the way of salvation, then read on. May the Lord make what thou readest profitable to thine establishment in the faith which is in Christ Jesus!

There are two things spoken of faith in Scripture, which highly deserve the attention of every true believer. The first is, the state of safety in which he is placed by Christ, and is delivered from every evil and danger in time and eternity, to which sin had justly exposed him; and the second is, the happiness of this state, consisting in an abundant supply of all spiritual blessings, freely given to him in Christ, and received as they are wanted, by the hand of faith, out of the fulness of Christ. By which means, whoever has obtained this precious faith, ought to have a quiet conscience, at peace with God, and need not fear any manner of evil, how much soever it be deserved; and thereby he may at all times come boldly *to the* throne of grace to receive whatever is neces-

sary for his comfortable walk heavenwards. Every grace, every blessing promised in Scripture, is his; and he may and does enjoy them, so far as he lives by faith upon the Son of God; so far as his life and conversation are well ordered, his walk is even, his spiritual enemies are conquered, the old man is mortified with his affections and lusts, and the new man is renewed day by day, after the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness. And from what he already enjoys by faith, and from the hopes of a speedy and perfect enjoyment, the Scripture warrants him to rejoice in the Lord with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

It is much to be lamented, that few live up to these two privileges of faith. Many persons who are truly concerned about the salvation of their souls, live for years together full of doubts and fears, and are not established in the faith that is in Christ Jesus; and several who are in a good measure established, yet do not walk happily in an even course, nor experience the continual blessedness of receiving, by faith, a supply of every want, out of the Saviour's fulness. These things I have long observed, and what I have been taught of them from the Scripture, and from the good hand of God upon me, I have put together, and throw it as a mite into the treasury. I am sure it was never more wanted than at present. May the good Lord accept the poor offering, and bless it to the hearts of his dear people, to the praise of the glory of his own grace.

For the clearer understanding of what shall be spoken upon the Life of Faith, it will be needful to consider, first, what faith is,—*for* a man must have

faith before he can make use of it. He must be in Christ, before he can live upon Christ. Now, faith signifies the believing the truth of the word of God: so says Christ—" Thy word is truth:" it relates to some word spoken, or to some promise made by him; and it expresses the belief which a person who hears it has of its being true: he assents to it, relies upon it, and acts accordingly. This is faith. And the whole word of God, which is the ground of faith, may be reduced to two points; namely, to what the law reveals concerning the justification of a righteous man, and to what the gospel reveals concerning the salvation of a sinner. An examination of these points will discover to us a great number of persons who have no faith at all in the word of God.

First, Every man in his natural state, before the grace of Christ, and the inspiration of his Spirit, has no faith. The Scripture says, God hath shut up all that are in this state in unbelief; and when the Holy Spirit awakens any one of them, he convinces him of sin, and of unbelief in particular. When the Comforter is come, says Christ, he shall convince the world of sin, because they believe not on me.

Secondly, A man who lives careless in sin, has no faith; he does not believe one word that God says in his law: let it warn him of his guilt, and show him his great danger, yet he sets at nought the terrors of the Lord; he acts as if there was no day of judgment, and no place of eternal torments; he has no fear of God before his eyes. How can such a practical atheist as this have any faith?

Thirdly, The formalist has not true faith. He *is content* with the form of godliness, and denies the

power of it. The veil of unbelief is upon his heart, and the pride of his own good works is ever before his eyes, that he finds no want of the salvation of Jesus, and is averse to the grace of the gospel. All his hopes arise from what he is in himself, and from what he is able to do for himself; he neither believes God speaking in the law, nor in the gospel. If he believed his word in the law, it would convict him of sin, and forbid him to go about to establish a righteousness of his own; because by the works of the law shall no flesh living be justified—yet this he does not believe. If he believes the word of God in the gospel, it would convince him of righteousness, of an infinitely perfect righteousness, wrought out by the God-man Christ Jesus, and imputed to the sinner without any works of his own; for unto him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is imputed for righteousness. To this he dare not trust wholly for his acceptance before God; therefore, he has not true faith.

Fourthly, A man may be so far enlightened as to understand the way of salvation, and yet have not true faith. This is a possible case. The apostle states it, 1 Cor. xiii. 2. "Though I understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, yet I may be nothing." And it is a dangerous case, as Heb. x. 26. "If we sin wilfully, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins." Here was such a knowledge of the truth, as left a man to perish without the benefit of Christ's sacrifice; therefore, he wanted that faith, which whosoever hath shall be saved.

What great numbers *are there* under these de-

lusions! Reader, art thou one of them? Examine closely; for it is of eternal moment. Prove thine ownself, whether thou be in the faith. If thou askest how thou shalt know it, since there are so many errors about it: hear what God's word says, Whoever believes truly, has been first convinced of unbelief. This our Lord teaches, John xvi. 9. "When the Comforter is come, he will convince the world of sin, because they believe not on me." He convinces of sin, by enlightening the understanding to know the exceeding sinfulness of it, and by quickening the conscience to feel the guilt of it,—he shows the misery threatened, and leaves sinners no false refuge to flee unto: he will not suffer them to sit down content with some sorrow, or a little outward reformation, or any supposed righteousness, but makes them feel, that, do whatever they will or can, still their guilt remains. Thus he puts them upon seeking out for salvation, and by the gospel he discovers it to them. He opens their understandings, to know what they hear and read concerning the covenant of the eternal Trinity, and concerning what the God-man has done in the fulfilling of this covenant. The Holy Spirit teaches them the nature of the adorable person of Christ, God manifest in the flesh, and the infinitely precious and everlasting meritorious righteousness which he has wrought out by the obedience of his life and death; and he convinces them, that his righteousness is sufficient for their salvation, and that nothing is required, except faith, for its being imputed unto them; and he works in them a sense of their being helpless, and without strength to rely *upon this* righteousness, and through faith in it, to

have peace with God. He makes them see that they cannot, by any power of their own, in the least depend upon it; for all their sufficiency is of God. It requires the same arm of the Lord which wrought out this righteousness, to enable them with the heart to believe in it: they are made clearly sensible of this from the word and Spirit of God, and from their own daily experience, and thereby they are disposed to receive their whole salvation from the free grace of God, and to him to ascribe all the glory of it. These are the redeemed of the Lord, to whom it is given to believe. They are quickened from a death in trespasses and sins; their consciences are awakened, their understandings are enlightened with the knowledge of Christ; they are enabled in their wills to choose him, and in their hearts to love him, and to rejoice in his salvation. This is entirely the work of the Holy Spirit; for faith is his gift, Eph. ii. 8. Unto you it is given, says the apostle, Phil. i. 29. in the behalf of Christ, to believe on him: none can give it but the Spirit of God; because it is the faith of the operation of God, and requires the same almighty power to believe with the heart, as it did to raise Christ's body from the grave, Eph. i. 20. And this power he puts forth in the preaching of the word, and makes it the power of God unto salvation. The word is called, 2 Cor. iii. 8. the ministration of the Spirit, because by it the Spirit ministers his grace and strength: so Gal. iii. 2. "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" It was by hearing faith preached that they received the Spirit; for faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God, which is therefore called

the word of faith. And thus the word is the means, in the hand of the Spirit, to dispose the hearts of those who hear it to receive and embrace Christ; whereby they attain the righteousness of faith, as Rom. x. 10. "With the heart, man believeth unto righteousness." The heart is the chief thing in believing; for into it Christ is received, and in it he dwells by faith. The vital union between Christ and the believer is manifested and made known in the heart, and therein it is cemented and established. With joy can the believer say, "My beloved is mine, and I am his:" happy for me, we are but one person in the eye of the law, and our interests are but one. Blessed state this! Christ gives himself freely to the believer, who also gives himself up in faith to Christ. Christ, as the believer's surety, has taken his sins upon himself, and the believer takes Christ's righteousness; for Christ makes over all that he has to the believer, who by faith looks upon it, and makes use of it as his own, according to that express warrant for his so doing, in 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23. All are yours, because ye belong to Christ.

This vital union between Christ and the believer, is largely treated of in Scripture. Christ thus speaks of it in his prayer for his people, John xvii. "I pray for them who shall believe on me through their word, that they all may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one." And in John iv. 56. he says, "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him;" and this indwelling is by faith, as Eph. iii. 17. "That Christ may dwell

in your hearts by faith." And it is the office of the Holy Spirit to manifest this union to their hearts, as John xiv. 20. "At the day when the Spirit of truth is come, ye shall know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you." And besides these, and many other plain words, this union is also represented by several striking images, such as that of husband and wife, who are in law but one person, the husband being answerable for the wife's debts, and the wife sharing in her husband's honours and goods. It is set forth by the union between a building and the foundation upon which it stands secure; between a tree and its branches, which live because they are in the tree, and grow by the sap which they receive from it; between the head and the members, which, by holding under the head, live and grow, having a supply of nourishment administered to every part. Under these beautiful images, the Scripture sets forth the reality, and the blessed fruits of this union. The Holy Spirit makes it known to the believer, by enabling him to rely on God's word as infallible truth, and to receive Christ's person as the Almighty Saviour: and he strengthens it, by enabling the believer to make use of Christ's fulness, and to live by faith upon him in all his offices, for the partaking of all his promised graces and blessings.

That faith which is of the operation of God, always produces the knowledge and the fruits of this blessed union, and enables the soul to give itself up to Christ, that it may be one with him, not in a figurative, metaphorical way, but as really and truly as the building is one with the foundation; as much one in interest, as husband and wife; one in influence, as the root

and the branches, the head and the members. So that this is not an empty notion about Christ, or some clear knowledge of him, or a mere approving of his way of salvation; but it is an actual receiving of him into the heart for righteousness to justify, and to dwell and reign there to sanctify; a receiving him as a perfect Saviour, and living upon him and his fulness; waiting upon him to be taught daily; trusting wholly for acceptance to his blood and righteousness; resting, relying, leaning upon his promised strength to hold out unto the end; and hoping for eternal life as the free gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord. The saving faith thus receives Christ, and thus lives upon Christ.

Now, reader, examine and prove thyself, whether thou hast this faith. Dost thou believe with thy heart unto righteousness? Thou canst not live upon Christ, unless thou art first in Christ. Thou must be first persuaded of thy interest in him, before thou canst make use of it, and improve it; and therefore, the knowledge of thy union with him must be clear and plain, before thou canst have a free and open communion with him. There must be faith, before there can be the fruits of faith; and strong faith, before there can be much and ripe fruit. Little faith will receive but little from Christ. The weak believer is full of doubts and fears, and when he wants comfort, or strength, or any other things which Christ has promised to give his people, he is questioning whether he has any right to expect them; and therefore he does not receive them, because he has not boldness and access with confidence to God by faith in Christ Jesus. From hence appears the

necessity of being established in the faith. The believer must have clear evidence of his interest in Christ, before he can live comfortable and happy upon Christ; therefore, he must look well to the foundation, and see there be no doubts left about his being settled upon it. Christ being the sure foundation, how can he safely build thereon all his salvation, unless he be first satisfied that he is upon it? The peace with God in his conscience, every act of spiritual life, and the whole walk and well-ordering of his conversation, depend upon the settling of this point. It ought to be finally determined, and brought to this issue: 'Christ is mine, I know it from the word of God. I have the witness of the Spirit of God, and Christ allows me, unworthy as I am, to make use of him, and of his fulness, for the supply of all my needs, and I find I do make use of him, and thereby I know, from daily experience, that I am in him, because I live upon him.' According as this point is settled, so in proportion will be the life of faith. If the believer be thoroughly grounded in it without any doubt or fear, then he may, and will with confidence, improve his interest in Christ; but if he still leave it in suspense, his faith can be but little, and therefore he will obtain little comfort or strength from Christ.

Reader, art thou one of the weak in faith? Dost thou feel it? Dost thou mourn for it? And dost thou know from whence thy faith is to be strengthened? Who can increase it, but he alone who gives it? O! pray, then, to the Lord God, to give thee the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, that the eyes of thy understanding may be enlightened to see the

infinite sufficiency of Christ's person, as God-man, and the everlasting merit of his life and death to save his people from their sins. And whatever hinders thee from seeing the fulness of Christ's salvation, and resting comfortably by faith upon it, earnestly entreat the Lord to remove it. If it be sin, beg of God to make thee more willing to part with it. If it be guilt, pray him to ordain peace in thy conscience through the blood of sprinkling. If it be much corruption, it cannot be subdued until it be first pardoned. If thou hast got under the spirit of bondage, look up to the Lord Christ for that liberty wherewith he makes his people free. Whatever it be, as soon as it is discovered to thee, make use of prayer, believing God's word of faithfulness, that what thou askest thou shalt have, and that he will so establish thee that thou shalt go on from faith to faith. May it be thy happy case. Amen.

Reader, if thou art an awakened man, convinced of sin by the word and Spirit of God, all thine enemies will try to keep thee from the clear knowledge of thy union with Christ. The reason is plain; because then thou wilt not be able to depend upon Christ's promised strength, and to make use of it by faith, which is almighty to defeat them all. Hearken not, therefore, to any suggestion, nor be afraid of any opposition, which would hinder thee from seeking to be fully convinced of thine interest in Christ, and of thy being a branch in the true vine. Satan will use all his wiles and fiery darts, and all carnal professors will be on his side, and they will have close allies in thine own breast, in thine unbelief, in thy legal spirit, and in thy lusts and corruptions.

Consider, why do these enemies fight so hard against thy being safely settled, and comfortably grounded upon Christ by living faith? Is it not, because thou wilt then be an overmatch for them through the strength of Jesus? And does not this plainly show thee the absolute necessity of knowing that Christ and thou art one? Till this be known, thou wilt be afraid to apply to him and to make use of his strength; and till thou dost use it, all thine enemies will triumph over thee. O beg of God, then, to increase thy faith, that thou mayest be fully convinced of thy union with Christ, and mayest live in him safe, and on him happy. Hear and read his word, and pray for the effectual working of the Lord, the Spirit in him, and by it, that faith may come and grow by hearing, until it be finally settled, without doubt or wavering, that Christ is thine, and thou art his.

After the believer is thus grounded and established in the knowledge of his union with Christ, it behooves him then to inquire, what God has given him a right to in consequence of this union; and the Scripture will inform him, that, in the covenant of grace, it has pleased the Father, that all fulness should dwell in his Son, as the head for the use of his members. He has it to supply all their need. They cannot possibly want any thing, but it is treasured up for them in his infinite fulness: there they may have it, grace for grace, every moment as their occasions require; and they have it in no other way, and by no other hand than faith, trusting the word of promise, and relying upon Christ's faithfulness and power to fulfil it; as it is written, "The just shall

live by his faith," Habak. ii. 4. Having received justification to life by faith in the righteousness of Christ, he depends on Christ to keep him alive, and makes use of Christ's fulness for all the wants of that spiritual life which he has given; he trusts him for them all, and lives upon him by faith for the continual receiving of them all, and according to his faith so it is done unto him.

Let this be well weighed and considered, that the justified person lives and performs every act of spiritual life by faith. This is a very important lesson, and therefore it is taught in Scripture as plainly as words can speak. Every thing is promised to, and is received by faith. Thus it is said, "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus; and if children, then heirs, according to the promise, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, and holiness:" made for their use wisdom to teach them, righteousness to justify them, and holiness to sanctify them; yea, he has all things in his fulness for their use, as the free grant speaks, 1 Cor. iii. 21, &c. "All things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." Consider, believer, what a large estate this is; thy title to it is good, and thou enterest into possession by faith. See then that thou makest use of thine inheritance, and live upon it. Do not say, when thou wantest any thing, I know not where to get it; for whatever the God-man has of wisdom, righteousness, holiness, power, and glory, he has it, as the head of the body, for thee as one of

his members, for thy use and benefit, and he has promised it to thee in his word. Make free with him then. Go to him with confidence. Thou canst not do him greater honour than to receive from him what he has to give. That is glorifying him. It is putting the crown upon his head, and confessing him to be a perfect, all-sufficient Christ, when it pleaseth thee, as it did his Father, that in him should all fulness dwell, and when thou art content to live out of thyself upon his fulness, for the supply of all thy needs in time and in eternity. To live thus upon him is his glory, and it is thy privilege, thy interest, and thy happiness. In every state, spiritual and temporal, and in every circumstance thou canst possibly be in, thou art commanded to look up to Christ, that thou mayest receive out of his fulness, and to depend upon him to save thee from every evil, and to bestow upon thee every good. In thy walk heavenwards, and in every thing thou meetest with by the way, put thy trust in Christ, and expect from him the fulfilling of all his promises. He has all power in heaven and earth for that very purpose. Still rely upon him, and cast thy burdens on him, when thou art tempted, when old corruptions arise, when the world and the devil assault thee, when under a sense of weakness and dulness in duty, when in darkness and desertion, in persecution and trouble, in pain and poverty, in sickness and death. This is the life of faith. Thou wilt live like a Christian indeed, if, being in any of these cases, thou believest that Christ is able, because he is almighty; and willing, because he has promised to supply thy wants, and then canst trust in him for that supply. Depend upon it thou

shalt have it, and it shall be done unto thee according to his word.

After the believer is become one with Christ, and through him has a right to all the riches of grace, and may by faith make use of them as his own, why is he so long in learning this lesson perfectly? Being adopted into the heavenly family, and an heir of the heavenly inheritance, why does not he immediately live up to his privilege and to his estate? His title is good; the inheritance is sure; all things are become his; for all fulness is in Christ, and by virtue of his union with Christ, this fulness is his, and he may by faith be always receiving out of it every grace and blessing which Christ has promised: why then does not he at once attain to this happy life of faith? Sad experience proves that young believers do not. They meet with so many difficulties, that they grow up slowly into Christ in all things. They do not attain to a solid establishment in the faith in a day. Enemies without and within stop their progress, insomuch that they often continue little children for a long time. They have the same right to Christ, the same privileges, and the same promised grace, which young men and fathers in Christ have, but they have not learned by experience how to improve their interest in him, and to make the most of it. The difficulties and temptations which weaken their hold of Christ, and stay their growth in him, are many; some of the chief are these:—

I. They continue little children and weak in faith, because they do not presently attain a solid acquaintance with the person of Christ, and are not thoroughly satisfied how able he was, and sufficient for every

thing he undertook, and how perfectly he has finished every part of his work.

II. This keeps them ignorant of many things in which the glory of his salvation consists; hence they have not clear believing views of its fulness and of its freeness.

III. By which means, they labour under many doubts about the manner of their receiving this salvation. A legal spirit working with their unbelief, puts them upon reasoning continually against being saved freely by grace through faith.

IV. These legal unbelieving reasonings gain great power from their unskilfulness in their warfare between nature and grace, the old man and the new, the flesh and the spirit.

V. All these difficulties are mightily strengthened from their hearkening to sense, and trusting to its reports more than to the word of God. While believers are under these difficulties, their faith meets with many checks in its growth; and, until they be enabled to overcome them, they continue to be little children in Christ. Their weak faith receives but little from Christ; and it continues weak, because they have but little dependence upon the effectual working of Christ's mighty power. The exceeding greatness of his power is able to strengthen them, and he has promised it, but they dare not trust him. Consider, therefore, reader, if thou art one of these babes, why thou dost not grow up faster into Christ.

1. The first thing that stops thee, is the ignorance which is in thy mind about his person, and the prejudice against him which is in thy carnal heart. These are in all men by nature; and these Satan

will work upon, in order to hinder the increase of thy faith. He will use all his cunning and his power to keep thee from growing in that knowledge of Christ, which is eternal life. He will inject into thy heart blasphemous thoughts against his Godhead, and when thou art reading in Scripture, or hearing about his being God manifest in the flesh, he will try to puzzle and perplex thy imagination with a "How can these things be?" He will represent the union of the two natures in Christ as a thing not to be understood; and as if they who believed it with the clearest evidence of God's word and Spirit, had only some fancy about it. He has an old grudge against Christ, and will not scruple to tell any lies of him. He was a liar from the beginning, and abode not in the truth. Regard him not. Mind what the word of truth says, and pray that thou mayest understand it; for the more thou knowest of the Lord Christ, that blessed God-man, the more wilt thou be settled and established in him. It is written of him, first, that he is God, true and very God, in the holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity; a person co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and the Holy Spirit, Isa. ix. 6. "Unto us a child is born, who is the mighty God;" secondly, that he is Jehovah, which signifies the self-existent essence, Isa. xliii. 11. "I, even I, am Jehovah, and beside me there is no Saviour:" from whence it is evident, that the Saviour is Jehovah, and that he exists in a manner independent of, and distinct from, all other beings and things. St. Jude makes the opposition to this fundamental truth the condemning sin of certain heretics, who denied Jesus Christ to be the only Lord God, and our Lord. In the cove-

nant of grace, this divine Person undertook to be made man. He who was true and very God, was made true and very man; he had a reasonable soul and human flesh, and was in all points like other men, sin excepted. And as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ. This is the glorious Person, who undertook in the covenant of grace to be man's surety. St. Paul calls him the Surety of the New Testament: and what could there be wanting in him for this high office? He is every way qualified to be the surety for man, who is himself true and very man, who is also God as well as man, and therefore has all the perfections of Jehovah to render what he did and suffered, as man's surety, infinitely and everlastingly meritorious.

This is the blessed object of faith, God and man united in one Christ. Consider then, reader, what the Scripture says of his wonderful person, in order that thy faith in him may be established. That very self-existent God, who spake, and all things were made, who commanded, and they stand fast to this very hour, was made flesh. He came to be the surety for his people, to obey and suffer in their stead. What could not his almighty power effect? Is any thing too hard for the Lord God? What obedience can his Father's law demand, which he is not infinitely able to pay? What sufferings can satisfy his Father's justice, which he is not absolutely qualified to endure? for he has every perfection and attribute equal with the Father. On this truth thou must rest: and is it not a sure foundation? In the certainty of it, thou must seek to be more grounded

every day; because, as thou growest in the knowledge of his divine person, thou wilt become more satisfied of his infinite sufficiency to save; and fully convinced of this, thou wilt be enabled from Scripture to answer and silence thine own unbelieving thoughts, and to reject the blasphemous suggestions of Satan against the Lord Christ. Observe then, that he is God, and that he is Jehovah. Read and meditate on what the Scripture says of his Godhead, and pray that thou mayest be taught of God to understand it: for no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost. It is his office to glorify Jesus, by enabling thee to believe him to be Lord and God, and to call him thy Lord and thy God, and to prove he is so, by thy humble dependence upon him for every blessing both in time and in eternity.

It is much to be lamented, that believers in general take so little pains to get a clear knowledge of the doctrine of the ever-blessed Trinity; for want of which, their faith is unsettled, and they are liable to many errors, both in judgment and practice. I would therefore most earnestly recommend it to all who are weak in faith, to be diligent in hearing and reading what in Scripture is revealed concerning the Trinity and Unity, looking up always for the inward teaching of the Holy Spirit; and I would direct them to a form of sound words in the Common Prayer Book, for "Trinity Sunday," which contains the shortest and best account of the subject that I ever saw. "It is very meet, right, and our bounden duty, that we should at all times, and in all places, give thanks unto thee, O Lord! almighty, everlasting God! who art one God, one Lord; not one only

person, but three persons in one substance; for that which we believe of the glory of the Father, the same we believe of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, without any difference or inequality." These are precious words. Meditate, reader, upon them, and entreat the Holy Spirit to enlighten thine understanding with the saving knowledge of them, that, being established in the doctrine of the ever-blessed Trinity, and of the Godhead of the Lord Christ, thou mayest be enabled to overcome the difficulties which arise.

2. From thy not being well acquainted with the nature of Christ's salvation, concerning which young believers are apt to have many doubts, carnal reason is strong in them. The spirit of bondage resists with many and mighty arguments, and unbelief musters up all its forces, and there is a long and obstinate fight against being saved freely and fully by the grace of Christ Jesus. But the arguments which God has provided in his word, when applied by his Spirit, will prevail and overcome. Meditate upon them for the establishment of thy weak faith.

(1.) Consider the covenant. Salvation is not a thing of chance, or left to man's will or power; but it was contrived by the blessed Trinity, in the covenant of grace, and every thing belonging to it was perfectly settled. It is said to be, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure. O thou of little faith, why then dost thou doubt? What! doubt of God's love? Here is a covenant springing from his mere love, and from everlasting. Doubt of its being well contrived? infinite wisdom orders it in all things. Doubt of its

being well executed? it is in all things sure, sure as God's almighty power and faithfulness can make it. What motives are here for the strengthening of thy faith! May the Lord render them effectual.

(2.) Reflect upon the undertakings of the Lord Christ, the surety of this covenant. There was nothing left out of this covenant; it was ordered in all things belonging to salvation, and Christ undertook to perform all things on the part of his Father, that his law might be magnified, and his justice made honourable and glorious; and on the part of the sinner, that he might be saved from all evil, and entitled to all good. And being God and man, united in one Christ, he was a proper surety to reconcile God to man, and to reconcile man to God. May these things then sink deep into thy heart, that thy surety has undertaken the whole of thy salvation, to do all for thee, and all in thee, and all by thee. What canst thou desire more for the settling of thy faith?

3. Perhaps thou wilt say, his undertakings were great, but has he fulfilled them? Yes, and so perfectly, that he is able to save to the uttermost. He was called JESUS, because he was to save his people from their sins: as their surety, he was to fulfil the law for them by his obedience, and to suffer the pains and penalties of it by his death and passion. Accordingly, in the fulness of time, he was manifest in the flesh, and came to do the will of his Father. Of his obedience to that will, he thus speaks: "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." Of his suffering that will, he said, with his last *breath*, "It is finished." Observe, whatever he un-

dertook to do in his life and death was finished; and it was demonstrated that, as man's surety, he had done and suffered every thing ordered in the covenant by his resurrection from the dead; for then did the Father declare him to be the Son of God with power. Will not all this satisfy thee, O thou of little faith? Here is one more cause of thy doubting removed: thou canst not deny but Christ has finished every thing he undertook, and in consequence thereof, he has all power in heaven and earth to bestow a full and finished salvation. What canst thou now object?

4. Does a thought arise in thy heart? It is finished, but is it so freely given that such an unworthy creature as I am may partake of it? Yes: it comes to thee in the way of a free gift; great, inestimable, and eternal as it is, yet it is all thine in receiving. Not he who worketh, but he who believeth is justified from all things. It is by faith that believers are justified and sanctified, are strengthened and comforted, in their walk; by faith they fight against all their enemies, and by faith they conquer, and lay hold of eternal life; and therefore, it is of faith that it might be by grace. Salvation is wrought out and finished by thy surety, given to thee freely, continued with all its blessings in time and through eternity, as a free gift, to the praise of the glory of free grace. Why therefore art thou discouraged? Hast thou nothing to buy with? Then obey the Lord's command, come and buy free salvation without money and without price. How should this motive still add to the establishment of thy faith? For there thou seest whatever thou wantest is thine

by believing. Thou mayest have it freely by grace. It is treasured up for thee in the fulness of thy dear Saviour, and thou canst not honour him more, than to make free use of it. What dost thou say to this; hast thou any thing to object? Canst thou find any fault with the covenant of grace, or with the undertakings of the God-man in it? No, certainly, the covenant was well ordered in all things and sure; and what the surety of the covenant undertook, he has perfectly fulfilled. Salvation is finished on his part. He has glorified the law by his infinitely perfect obedience, he has made divine justice honourable by his sufferings and death, he has brought in everlasting righteousness for his people, and will bring them to everlasting glory; for he has already taken possession of it for them as the head of his body the church, and he has all power in heaven and earth to save them day by day, until he make them partakers of his eternal salvation. What can thy heart wish for more than such a Saviour, and such a salvation? O! be not faithless then, but believing; and if thou hast any doubts left, endeavour to have them cleared up by reading and prayer, until thy faith be perfectly settled on the divinity of God thy Saviour, and the infinite sufficiency of his salvation. These two points lie at the very foundation of the Christian religion. They must be supposed in all its principles, and built upon in all its practice; therefore, being of universal influence, if they be thoroughly established, thy faith will be steadfast, and thy life well ordered and comfortable. Examine then, and prove thyself here before thou readest any farther. Dost thou believe Christ to be true and very God, in every perfection

and attribute equal with the Father? and is his a full and a free salvation? All the following directions depend upon, and can only profit thee, so far as thou believest these two points. Look well then to thy establishment in them. If it be strong, the life of faith will be steady and prosperous; but if it be weak, will be liable to be tossed about continually with errors, and overcome with temptations, especially with those to which a legal spirit will expose thee.

III. This I purpose to show under the third general head, in which is to be considered, how the little children in Christ, for want of being established in the belief of his Godhead, and of his full and free salvation, labour under many doubts: a legal spirit working with their unbelief, puts them upon reasoning continually against being saved freely by grace through faith.

He is of a legal spirit who is under the law, and apprehends himself bound to keep it as the condition of life, requiring of him, Do this and thou shalt live. In his understanding, he sees this and no other way to life; in his will, he is continually inclined to it, and in his heart, he loves it; because he fancies it is in his own power to attain life in this way, and he can merit it by his own works, which mightily gratifies his self-love, and indulges his pride. This legal spirit reigns over all men in their natural state, but does not discover its tyranny until it be opposed; and then, so soon as the soul is quickened from a death in trespasses and sins, it begins to fight, trying to keep the poor sinner in bondage by its legal workings and strivings, and putting him upon seeking for some good disposition or qualification in himself, on

account of which God should love him. Thus the awakened soul, under the spirit of bondage, always seeks deliverance by the works of that law, which can do nothing more than bring him to the knowledge of sin, discover to him the exceeding sinfulness of it, and the exceeding great punishment which it deserves; by which means it is always nourishing the doubts and fears of unbelief. And after the Lord has in a measure removed them by a clear discovery of the salvation that is in Jesus, and by the gift of faith, yet still this legal spirit will be trying to bring the soul into bondage again to fear, and it too often prevails. Young believers find it the worst enemy they have to deal with. Is is a sly, subtle foe, that seems to intend them a kindness, while it is always on the side of their greatest enemy. It would appear to them to be actuated by a zeal for God, but it is to eclipse the glory of the Lord Christ, to take away all the all-sufficiency of his salvation, and to rob them of their great joy and peace in believing.

If any one should ask, how this legal spirit comes to have such power over mankind? The Scripture informs us,

1. That all men, being God's creatures, are under the law to him, bound to keep it, or bound, if they transgress, to suffer the threatened pains and penalties. In this state man was created, and in it all men are by nature, and therefore there is in us all a continual leaning to the law, and a desire to attain righteousness by the works of it. We are all wedded to this way of gaining God's favour. The apostle says, there is a marriage-union between us and the law, and it, like a husband, has dominion over us as

long as it liveth; so that we cannot be married to Christ, until that be dead wherein we were held. You may see this in the Jews. How does Moses labour to bring them off from an opinion of their own righteousness? And a greater than Moses has done the same in his discourses against the Scribes and Pharisees; yea, the apostles of our Lord were forced to write and preach against this leaning to the law, it gave such disturbance to the true disciples of Christ. And notwithstanding the Scripture arguments against it, yet we have great numbers among us, who seek for a justifying righteousness by the works of the law. And they are put upon seeking this,

2. From their ignorance of the law. They are not acquainted with its nature; for it demands what they cannot pay. It insists upon an obedience, spiritual, perfect, and uninterrupted; for the least offence, if but in thought, it comes with its fearful sentence, "Cursed is every one who continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them." On him who does not continue in all things, (and not one man ever did,) this sentence takes place, and if he was to live a thousand years, he could not do any thing to repeal it. The law will always be to him the ministration of condemnation, and the ministration of death, and that is all it can do for him. It provides no remedy, and gives him no hope, but leaves him condemned to the first and to the second death; and yet, such is the blindness of the sinner, that he will be still leaning to the law, and afraid to trust wholly to the righteousness of Christ; and this arises,

3. From his ignorance of Christ's righteousness,

which is infinitely perfect, and wants no works of the law to be joined with it in the justifying of a sinner; because it is the righteousness of God, wrought out by the God-man for his people; and it is the righteousness of faith; they receive it by faith without works: so that it is directly opposite to the righteousness of a legal spirit. Hence we have many among us, great professors too, who are ignorant of God's righteousness; they have not been entirely brought off from a legal foundation, and therefore they talk of being justified without a justifying righteousness, which, if God were to do, he would be unrighteous, and which, as he has declared, he will not do, their fancied justification leaves them still in their sins. They dare not put their whole trust and confidence in the righteousness of Christ imputed unto sinners, and made theirs by faith. They have many fears about imputed righteousness, although the apostle has not scrupled to mention it eleven times in one chapter, Rom. iv.; and these fears make them read the Scripture with such prejudice, that they say they cannot find the expression, "faith in the righteousness of Christ," in all the Bible. They may find the sense of the expression in Moses, and in all the prophets, and the very words in 2 Pet. i. 1. "Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them who have obtained like precious faith with us, (in the Greek is *eis*,) in the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." Here is faith in the righteousness of Christ, with several glorious titles to recommend it; namely, it is the righteousness of God, of God our Saviour, of Jesus Christ. From whence can men's opposition to this way of

justification arise, but from their not being convinced by the Spirit of God of the necessity of Christ's righteousness? It is his peculiar office to convince of this truth. No teaching but his can do it. O that he may do it in the hearts of those, who, out of a zeal for God, though not according to knowledge, eclipse the glory of the Lord, and rob afflicted consciences of their comfort by opposing imputed righteousness! It is a righteousness of so high and heavenly a nature, wrought out by another, and so wonderful a Person—is bestowed as a free gift upon the chief of sinners, whereby alone they obtain remission of their sins, and are made partakers of the kingdom of heaven; and they receive it by faith only, without works, which a legal spirit always wants to mix with it—that no one could ever believe in it, unless it were given him from above. May it be given to those professors who cannot yet submit to the righteousness of Christ to see their want of it, and with the heart to believe in it unto salvation.

Reader, hast thou not found what an enemy this legal spirit is to thy peace and joy, and how it is always inclining thee to some self-righteousness through thy ignorance of the righteousness of the law, and of the righteousness of faith? And wouldst thou gladly be delivered from it? Know then, that nothing can subdue it, but the bringing into thy conscience a better hope from a better righteousness than that of the law; and when thou art enabled to plead it there, against all the charges of sin and Satan, then thou wilt stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made thee free. His is a better righteousness; it is infinitely perfect and everlasting, even the right-

eousness of God: by faith in this righteousness, thou shalt be saved from the law, and shalt receive remission of sins: through it the Father doth accept thee, and give thee the Spirit of his Son, to lead, and comfort, and sanctify thee; he doth love thee and bless thee, as his dear child, making all things work together under him for thy good, and keeping thee by his mighty power through faith unto salvation; so that in and on account of this righteousness, thou shalt be saved from all the evils of sin, and receive all spiritual blessings in earth and heaven. And this thou shalt have freely, without any merit, or work of the law; for this righteousness comes wholly by grace, and is for thee a sinner, as such, and is to justify thee from the condemnation of the law, to turn its curses into blessings, and its threatened punishments into happiness. And this it can do for thee perfectly and everlastingly; so that, being found in this righteousness, there is no grace promised in time, or glory in eternity, but it shall be thine. The Lord God promises them to thee in the fullest and freest manner: to thee, without any exception or limitation, being a sinner and ungodly; though one of the vilest and basest, yet to thee, as such, is the word of this salvation sent. And it will be all thine, in the comfortable enjoyment of it, through believing. Thou art to bring nothing to recommend thee but that thou art a sensible sinner; and thy right and title to a finished salvation is clear from the warrant of God's word, when thou believest with thy heart in the righteousness of Christ. The divine command is, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ:" the promise is, Whosoever believeth in him,

shall not perish, but shall receive remission of sins, shall be justified from all things, shall have everlasting life. Why then dost thou lean to works, since salvation is by faith? Why dost thou disquiet thyself about attaining the righteousness of the law, and thereby suffer the law to disturb the peace of thy conscience, since thou hast a far better righteousness, which ought to reign there, even the righteousness which is of God by faith? For thou art a believer, and although a weak one, yet thou hast as good a title to Christ and his righteousness as the strongest believer in the world; because thy right comes from the free grant of the word of grace, and is apprehended by faith, by which all things are become thine. Thou art an heir of them all by faith in Christ Jesus. O thou of little faith, why then dost thou doubt? Remember how highly thou dishonourest the infinite love and free salvation of Jesus, and how much thou robbest thy own soul of its peace, and its growth in grace, by thy weak and little faith. Think upon these things, and entreat the Author and Finisher of the faith to strengthen it in thy soul.

But perhaps thou wilt say, How shall I so live upon Christ with my weak faith that it may grow stronger, and I may get the better of my legal spirit? Here is the remedy; may it be to thee effectual! The Scripture directs thee to look at Christ Godman as thy surety, who for thee has wrought out a finished salvation; and whatever he has promised in his word relating to this salvation, thou art to trust him for the making of it good, and to depend upon his faithfulness and power to make it good to thee.

Whatever, therefore, he has done and suffered to save thee from the curse of the law, and from the spirit of bondage, and to make thee free with the liberty of the children of God, thou art to live upon him for these blessings, and by faith to be always receiving them from him, in the fullest and largest measure that he promises them to thee. Look not into thyself then for any qualification, but look unto Jesus, that thou mayest experience more of that liberty wherewith he hath made thee free, and mayest be no longer a babe, unskilful in the word of righteousness. Hear what he says: If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed—free from the law of sin and death, free from condemnation at the bar of God; and being freed from the bondage of corruption, ye shall be brought into the glorious liberty of the children of God, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ. This is the freedom which God promises thee: it is very extensive, has many noble privileges and vast blessings. By faith, all is thine. See how perfectly believers have received all, and may thy faith be like theirs. Rom. viii. 15, &c. "Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we pray, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness to our spirits, that we are the children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." Observe what is here said of the believing Romans, and by faith thou shalt experience the same as perfectly as they did.

1. They were freed from the spirit of bondage, under which they once had laboured.

2. They were so freed as to be under it no more; they were not to fear again, as heretofore: for,

3. They had received the Spirit of adoption, and he gave them the evidence of their sonship. Upon which,

4. They believed God was their reconciled Father, and they had boldness and access to him with confidence. And, therefore,

5. They lived in light, and walked in love, like his children and heirs, who were to abide in his house for ever.

See also what great freedom the Galatians had, chap. iv. 4, &c. "God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ." O what treasures of grace and consolation are there in this scripture, tending to subdue thy legal spirit! Consider some of them.

1. All men having broken the law, and being under the curse of it, Christ was made under the law, that the law might reach him as the surety of his people; accordingly,

2. By his obedience to the precepts, and by his suffering the penalties of the law, he redeemed his people who were under the law; so that,

3. They are no longer in bondage to it, but being made free, and having received the adoption of sons,

4. They have the Spirit of liberty sent into their

hearts to witness to them, that Christ fulfilled the law for them; and,

5. That the Father loves them as dear children, and they love him, and serve him, without fear, crying to him, Abba, Father;

6. Wherefore they are no longer servants in bondage to any one, but are made free indeed, being now the sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. And,

7. If sons, then heirs of God, and free to inherit whatever he has promised to give his children in earth and heaven.

These and many more arguments are contained in this one scripture, tending to subdue thy legal spirit, and to bring thee to live more comfortably by faith upon Christ, who, as thy surety, has fully kept the law for thee in his life and death. Thou art to consider thyself now, not under the law, but under grace, and therefore absolutely free from the condemning power of the law. This thou must maintain against all the carnal reasonings of thy legal spirit, "Christ is my law-fulfiller." And thou wilt glorify him for redeeming thee from under the law, and wilt live in sweet peace in thine own conscience, while thou keepest fast hold of this most blessed and eternally precious truth. May all thy reading and prayer, and the use of all means, help thee to grow in the knowledge and experience of it!

There is a very strong bias and leaning in weak believers to a legal spirit, which ought to make them read such promises as I have been mentioning, over and over again, that God may thereby encourage them to maintain the liberty which he hath given

them in Christ Jesus, and to stand fast in it against the fresh attacks of the devil and unbelief. They should be always jealous over themselves, and watchful against their enemies: because, after they have, in a truly gospel and evangelical way, through grace got their legal spirit subdued; yet, if it be not in the same way kept subdued, it will break out with more power than ever, and will be likely to bring them into bondage again to fear. And this may, and I have known it often happen, after they had obtained some great victories over it; and finding it not stir for some time, they flattered themselves they should have but little trouble with it any more. Thus they were drawn off their guard, which gave room to their legal spirit to exert itself again with vigour. This surprised the weak believers, put them upon reasoning and doubting, whether all had been right with them before: and so, at the very time when they should have taken the shield of faith, and should have been making use it, they were questioning whether they had any, which left them unarmed in the midst of their enemies, an easy prey to every temptation; but an invisible power kept them safe, although they were not comfortable in themselves.

For the encouragement of persons in this case, that they may presently recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, they should observe,

1. What the Scripture says of a legal spirit, describing it to be one of the members of their corrupt nature, one of the affections of the flesh, which will never be quite dead, while the breath is in their bodies. It is an enemy that will be always fighting against *the Holy Spirit; for* they are directly con-

trary the one to the other, and therefore believers must not dream of any such victory as leaves no more fighting, but must expect sharp battles with their legal spirit as long as ever they live. And,

2. The same means by which they formerly obtained victory must be made use of again. As often as the legal spirit is tempting, Christ's strength must be opposed to it, and his strength must be brought into the soul by faith in his righteousness, as it is written, Isa. xlii. 24. "Surely shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength." Righteousness comes first, and is established in the conscience, that it may be pleaded and maintained there against all the charges and accusations of the law. And as often as these arise afresh, still they must be answered, and silenced with this plea—In the Lord Christ have I righteousness, he is my lawfulfiller, and I depend upon his promised strength to make me stand fast in that liberty wherewith he hath made me free. And the soul must not only thus quiet and stay itself, by faith upon the righteousness and strength of Christ, for victory over the present temptations, but must also,

3. Continually do this; because there is in our nature a continual opposition to it, the experience of which is the believer's safety. The abiding sense of his being naturally inclined to lean to legal dependencies, and therefore his want of Christ every moment to justify him by his righteousness, and to keep him by his strength, will be the surest way to prevent his falling into bondage; for this will keep him very jealous over himself, and will show him the necessity of living out of himself for righteousness

and strength; and while he liveth upon Christ for these by faith, he shall not be overcome by any enemy.

The glory of the incarnate God, and his infinite sufficiency to save, have not a greater enemy than a legal spirit, and therefore I have enlarged upon this point, that believers might be convinced from the word of God, they were saved from the condemnation of the law. They will never live comfortably, till they see the law dead and buried, and then willingly give up themselves to be espoused to Christ; who will make them free indeed. And when they have learned of him to enjoy and walk in their Christian liberty, then they will be better acquainted with the warfare between nature and grace, the old man and the new, the flesh and the spirit.

IV. This warfare is the fourth great hinderance, that stops the growth of faith in weak believers. They are unskilful in it, soon tired of it, and often likely to be defeated. They do not enter into the battle strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might; nor are they certain, if they fall in battle, they shall be saved with an eternal salvation. These are great discouragements, and until these be removed, they cannot fight the good fight of faith, like good soldiers of Christ Jesus.

The case is thus:—There is in every believer an old man and a new man, nature and grace, flesh and spirit, and these are opposite and contrary the one to the other, in their principles and actions; they are always desiring different things, and pursuing different ends, which occasions a continual war between them The flesh lusteth always against the spirit,

and has many and mighty allies on its side, armies of lusts, the faculties of soul and body to bring forth sin, hosts of fallen angels, and all the world that lieth in wickedness. But the new man, renewed in the spirit of his mind, has a reconciled God on his side, and therefore he need not fear what any enemy can do unto him, but may bravely face the stoutest of them, even death itself, relying upon that sure word of promise, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Here is the believer's encouragement to fight, his God will never leave him; here he obtains victory every day, his God never forsakes him; and after he has fought the good fight of faith, his God and Saviour will make him more than conqueror; he will send death to kill sin; and then the believer will never more have temptation from it, no sorrow about it: but till that happy time come, he must be fighting against his corrupt nature and all his allies; no peace can be made with them, not even a truce; he must expect no kind of favour from them, because they are God's irreconcilable enemies; and therefore, as long as he is in the world, he must be fighting against the world; as long as he has a body of flesh, he must oppose it with its affections and lusts, because they war against the soul; and as long as he is in the reach of temptation, he must oppose the tempter, steadfast in the faith, never putting off his armour, until the Lord give him a discharge.

The believer's peace within, and victory without, are closely connected with the clear understanding of this case; and although I have stated it from the word of God, and agreeably to the sense in which

the church of God has always interpreted it, yet, for its more full confirmation, some testimonies must be brought, which speak to the very point: first, to the believer's having in him an old man and a new; secondly, that these two are at war; and thirdly, that they fight together till death.

1. The apostle says to the saints at Ephesus, chap. iv. 22, &c. "Put off the old man, put on the new." Mind, the same persons had both in them an old man, corrupt, according to his deceitful lusts, daily to be put off, and a new man to be put on, and renewed day by day in the spirit of his mind. The old man is described to have a body of sin with all his members, his affections, and lusts; these must not be obeyed, but mortified. "Let not sin reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lust thereof, neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin," Rom. vi. 12, 13. The saints at Rome had sin in them, and it wanted to reign as it had done heretofore in the lusts thereof; but,

2. They were not to obey them. There was in them a new man, who was to fight against those fleshly lusts which war against the soul. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would," Gal. v. 17. Here is battle between two: the flesh, the whole nature of the old man; and the spirit, the new man born again of the Spirit: the cause of it is, the one wills what the other hates, each wants to carry his own will into execution, and these being contrary the one to the other, they fight for mastery:

in the battle, the flesh, the old man, is defeated, and the Spirit working in the new man conquers; and this lusting and fighting is in one and the same person, in him who is said to be not under the law, to be led by the Spirit, and to live and to walk in the Spirit. In Rom. viii. 7. the apostle calls the flesh the carnal mind, and he says, "It is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be;" since it is enmity itself, there is no reconciling it, it will not, nay it cannot obey God, but is ever lusting and rebelling against his law. The nature of the battle is described at length in Rom. vii. The chapter consists of three parts: first, the believer's liberty from the law, to ver. 6; secondly, he answers some objections made against the law from its nature and properties, and that in his own person, because it had been the means of bringing him to the right knowledge of sin, ver. 7; and sin being discovered by the law through the corruption of nature, raged and rebelled the more in him, ver. 8; and the law had made him sensible of God's anger against sin, and of his deserving death and hell for it, ver. 9 to 14; and from thence to the end of the chapter, he describes the conflict between the old man and the new, the one consenting to the law, and the other resisting the law. In this conflict there were three sharp attacks: in the first, he found in himself two contrary principles of action always resisting each other, the old man fighting against the new, from ver. 14 to 18; secondly, when the will of the new man was good, through the opposition of the old man, it had not the desired effect, ver. 19, 20; and thirdly, he felt in himself two contrary laws,

both requiring obedience, the law of the members warring and rebelling against the law of God written in the renewed mind; for no sooner did his mind, guided by the Holy Spirit, set about any thing which God's law commanded, but he found the law of the members making a strong resistance. This he groaned under as a heavy burden, and was humbled for it before God, expecting pardon from him, and victory every day, and perfect deliverance at last.

I cannot enlarge upon this chapter. Turn to it, and read it over upon the plan which I have here laid down, remembering all along, that St. Paul is describing himself. He ten times says, it is himself he is speaking of, from ver. 7 to 14, where he is showing of what use the law had been to him, when he was first convinced of sin; and from thence to the end, he mentions himself thirty-eight times. I, the apostle Paul, I myself, my very self, and not another; I myself am, now, at this present, at the very time of writing this; I myself, whom the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made free from the law of sin and death; I myself, to whom now there is no condemnation, for I am in Christ Jesus, and I walk after the Spirit, am still at war with sin that dwelleth in me, with the old man, with the flesh, with the law of the members, with the body of sin. Although I have a new nature, and God is on my side, yet it is a hard and a sharp battle. I find it so. The length of it makes it still more painful, and forces me to cry out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Paul was not out of God's favour, or accursed; but as the word rendered *wretched*,

means, he was wearied and tired with this continual fighting, troubled with the filthy motions of sin rising, and striving, and rebelling in him, and giving him no rest; this was such a hard warfare, that he was ever looking out and praying, "Who shall deliver me?" He meant wholly, perfectly, deliver me from this corruption. He sighed for it, not because he doubted of an absolute deliverance, but because he had sure and certain hope of it; not because he was ignorant who his deliverer was, but because he had steadfast faith in him. "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ." This comforted him, and kept him fighting on with courage: he knew that he should gain the victory, and through Christ, not through his own virtues or works, but through faith in the life and death, in the blood and righteousness of Christ, he should at last be more than conqueror.

Since this was the case with the apostle, who can expect a discharge from this warfare until death? What! says one, is it to continue so long? Yes. The Scripture is very clear to this point, as I was thirdly to show,

3. The seat of the corruption of the old man, or of the flesh, is not only in our nature, but is also our very nature itself: that which is born of the flesh is flesh, altogether carnal and corrupt. It is a filthy fountain, always sending forth impure streams; and therefore, while the believer is in the body, he must either be fighting against the flesh, or else be led captive by it. We that are, says Paul, in this tabernacle of flesh, do groan, being burdened with sin and sorrow. And when did they expect an end of their groaning, and rest from their burdens? Not till

the tabernacle was dissolved by death. Ourselves, says he, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. The body will be redeemed from the grave, and raised like the glorious body of Jesus Christ: this is promised, and this we wait for, and until death deliver us from this mortal, corruptible body, we shall be groaning under the burden of it. This was St. Paul's case. He had long sighed to be discharged from his warfare; and, like an old, wearied, tired soldier, he wished the hard, tedious campaign was ended, that he might enter into rest: but hear with what joy he at last cries out, "I have fought the good fight." Have fought it? What! is the battle over? Yea, just over.—"I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand—I have finished my course." My battle and my life are finished together; and so must thine, reader: thou art to resist unto blood, striving against sin; for thou art called to fight the good fight of faith, until thou lay hold of eternal life. Since thou art a believer, however weak, and hast a new man in thee as well as an old, they will be fighting against each other till thou finish thy course. And if this discourage thee, consider what God has spoken concerning this warfare, and what exceeding great and precious promises he has made to them who are engaged in it. He has promised to pardon those corruptions of the old man, to subdue them, and to deliver thee from the very being of them. Canst thou desire more? Mark well what he says to thee, and be not faithless, but believing.

1. Although the believer has an old man, corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts, always warring against the new man, yet the Lord God has promised a free and a full pardon; because he has imputed sin, all thy sin, to the Son of his love, who bore it in his own body upon the tree. After the apostle, in Rom. vii. had described the battle between them, he makes this inference, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus"—to them who are *in* Christ, united by faith as members to him their head, and thereby partakers of his righteousness, there is *now*, while they are fighting against their corruptions, no condemnation; "For," says he, "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and of death," Rom. viii. 2. These words demonstrate, that Paul was speaking of himself in the 7th chapter. Although he had the corruption of nature still in him, and was fighting against it, yet, being in Christ by faith, he was made free from the guilt and punishment due to it; therefore he had, and every believer shall have, a full pardon. In consequence of which,

2. He shall subdue the corruptions of the old man. This is promised, and shall be made good. The Lord encourages believers to oppose the reign of sin in their mortal body, and not to obey it in the lusts thereof, with this promise—"Sin shall not have dominion over you," Rom. vi. 14. Ye are under grace, and grace is almighty to subdue sin; because it is atoned for. In like manner, he says to the Galatians, v. 16. "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh." Ye shall not fulfil them either in word or deed. The lusts

of the flesh will be in you, but not one of them shall reign over you: the Spirit of Jesus will teach you to resist, and enable you to overcome them, yea, to crucify and mortify them day by day. And besides this, the Lord has promised,

8. Deliverance from the very being of thy corruptions. The time is coming, when they shall not exist in the believer, nor any more be suffered to tempt him. He shall be made holy and blameless, without spot or wrinkle of sin, or any such thing. In this perfect state, the Father now sees him, and accepts him in the Beloved; and after death admits the soul into his presence, cleansed with the blood, clothed with the righteousness, adorned with the graces, of his dear Son: and body, soul, and spirit, shall be in this perfect state in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ—they shall be unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints. It doth not yet appear how great a perfection of holiness this will be, but we know that when he shall appear, we shall then be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

Such are the divine promises. And dost thou not see from hence, reader, what great things thou art to expect in thy present warfare? If thou sayest, How shall I attain all that is promised? Know, that it is come to thee by faith. Christ, and all that he has, is thine upon believing, and particularly a free pardon for indwelling sin, as well as for any other. Consider him as thy surety, God-man taking thy sins and sufferings upon himself to save thee from them. By his life and death he has obtained full salvation, which he gives to thee freely. And

thou hast received it. Thou canst not deny but thou art a believer, and it is written—"All that believe are justified from all things," from the corruptions of their nature, as well as the corruptions of their lives. Know then, that there is no condemnation to thee. The Judge himself says so. And when he acquits, who shall lay any thing to thy charge? Here thou must hold, through the power of the Lord, if thou wouldst have thy spiritual warfare successfully conducted. Abide by the sentence of God, and keep condemnation out of thy conscience. Have it ready to plead against all charges, from whatever quarter they come, that Christ hath made ME free from the law of sin and of death.

Here I must refer thee back to what has been said concerning Christ and his finished salvation. Thou now seest how necessary it is thou shouldst be well established in the belief of his Godhead, and the infinite sufficiency of his salvation; so that he is both able and willing to save thee from all thy sins, and all the misery due to them, and to bestow upon thee eternal happiness, and to bring thee by his almighty power safe to the eternal enjoyment of it. All this he will give thee, not for working, but in believing. I entreat thee therefore to read again and again, what has been before said upon these subjects; and the good Lord help thee to apply it to thy present case, that thou mayest be fully assured thou art in Christ, and that there is no condemnation to thee.

But perhaps thou art ready to say—Steadfastly do I believe all this; but I do not find such victory over my corruptions as I could wish; nay, I think at

times they rage more than ever. Here thou forgettest the Lord is thy strength. Thou dost not make use of him, and therefore thou failest. The woman with the bloody issue grew worse and worse, till she went to Christ; so wilt thou. Why is it given thee to know Christ in the spirit, but that thou shouldst go to him daily, and plead his promise—Lord, thou hast declared that sin shall not have dominion over thy people; I believe this word of thine cannot be broken; and therefore, helpless in myself, I rely upon thy faithfulness to save me from the dominion of such and such a sin (as then tempts thee). Put forth thy power, O Lord Christ, and get thyself glory in subduing my flesh, with its affections and lusts. And then trust him to make his word good, and wait the event. Sooner shall heaven and earth pass away, than sin, any sin thus left with Christ to be subdued, shall reign over thee.

If thou sayest, I think I seek for victory over sin in no other way, and yet I do not attain it so completely as I desire—depend upon it thou art under some mistake; for Christ is almighty to fulfil every promise in its largest sense and fullest meaning; and there never was a believer who could justly charge him with the breach of his word. Perhaps thou dost believe, that power to subdue sin comes from Christ, and thou are expecting it from him; but hast thou not some legal dependence, some notion of thy own working together with him? Search and see. Dost thou commit ALL to the Lord, who is to do ALL and in ALL? Is the whole battle left to him! wisdom, and courage, and armour, and strength, and patience, and victory, are all from the Lord. If

thou art not doing this simply, thou art not living by faith upon Christ, but thou art fighting in thine own strength, and depending upon some inherent stock of grace, or knowledge, or experience. While these proud, selfish motives put thee upon asking his help, he will not give it thee, because thou dost not wholly depend upon him for it.

Or perhaps Christ doth not appear on thy side, because thou art proposing some wrong end. Thou art working and striving against sin to establish a righteousness of thine own, which is to be some part of thine acceptance before God; and thou hast been trying in thine own strength to get thy corruptions quite subdued, but they were too strong for thee, and therefore now thou art glad to make use of Christ's help. And if he would do the work for thee, then thou wouldst have confidence in the flesh; and this, thy fancied holiness, would be the ground of thy rejoicing before God. Is it not so? if it be, thou wilt never succeed upon this plan. Christ will not give his glory to another, nor put the crown of his gospel grace upon the head of thy legal dependence.

Or perhaps thou art expecting from Christ what he has not promised, such a victory over thy corruptions, that they shall not fight again for some time, or that they shall be quite dead and buried. And so they shall be, in the Lord's appointed time. But now he calls upon thee to fight against them; he provides thee armour for that purpose, even the whole armour of God; and he requires thee to resist unto blood, striving against sin, promising thee daily victory. This is thy present state of warfare. To this thou art now called, and there is no discharge

in this war. O beware then, as thou lovest thy soul, of a false peace! Thou wilt be sadly deluded, if thou ever supposest that thy fighting is over, before thy course be finished. The good fight of faith must continue till death: for till then, corruption being in thee, thou must oppose it, relying upon God for promised victory over it. He is able to save thee from the very being of it now, as well as in heaven; but it is not his mind and will. Here he will have thee to live by faith, which is every moment to keep thee dependent upon Christ, or thou wilt fall. This is to exalt his grace, and to subdue thy selfish legal spirit, to humble thy pride, to put thee upon prayer and watchfulness, to make sin more hateful, and heaven more desirable, and to secure the glory of every victory to him, whose strength is perfected in thy weakness. These are some of his gracious purposes in keeping thee continually dependent upon his strength; and if he has made thee willing to fight and conquer to the praise of the glory of his grace, then thou wilt experience that blessed promise—"Sin shall not have dominion over thee." And it will not be long before sin shall not have a being in thee.

Reader, if thou hast fallen into these, or any other mistakes concerning the subduing of thy corruptions, mind what is written, and what is promised. Having first received, through faith in the blood of Christ, the pardon of thy sin, then, as one of his good soldiers, thou art to fight against it all thy life; he, being on thy side, promises to subdue sin for thee. Without him thou canst do nothing in this warfare; and therefore thy faith, resting on his pro-

mise, is to wait the fulfilling of it. He has given thee his word, that he will use his almighty power for this purpose. To that word must thou look, believing that Christ will bring thee victory continually, if thy faith fail not—greater, as thy faith increases—complete, when the good fight of faith shall be ended, and thou shalt rest from thy labours. All this he stands engaged to do, and his power is able to fulfil his engagements, and thy faith will bring the happy experience of his power. When corruptions rise, temptations are strong, enemies numerous, dangers on every side, that is the time to glorify Christ, by making use of his promised strength. Then put thy trust in the Captain of thy salvation, and fear not. Look unto Jesus, and look at nothing but him. The battle is his. He will fight for thee, and thou shalt hold thy peace. Leave him to direct all, to do all, and to finish all relating to it; and then, as he can get all the glory, thou shalt see what a salvation he will bring thee. O that thy faith did but reach to the extent of his promises!—how successful would be thy spiritual warfare—such victories over thine enemies, corruptions so subdued, the world so crucified, Satan so defeated, as thou canst now scarce believe. The Lord increase thy faith! Look up to him for it; because, as thy faith increases, let the battle grow hotter and hotter, thou wilt find thyself safer, and more reason to give thanks to God, through Jesus Christ thy Lord.

For want of attending to the important truths already considered, and of bringing them into constant use and exercise, young believers are liable to fall into another great mistake, which keeps their faith

weak, and stops its growth; namely, a hearkening to sense, and trusting to its reports, which is the fifth general head I purpose to consider.

V. They are seeking to be established, and they think, that they should have no doubt of their being true believers, if they had but the testimony of sense, and comfortable feelings to assure them of it. And being used to judge in this way in other matters, (for it is our strongest evidence in natural things,) they are disposed to expect the same in spiritual; and they are the rather disposed to it, because sensible comforts are promised in Scripture; which being very desirable and pleasing to nature, they art apt to covet them too much, and from not regarding what the Scripture says about them, they are apt to seek them in a wrong way, and for a wrong end. Sense judges from what it sees, and draws its inferences from what it feels; so that its report to the conscience, either of a believer's state, or of his growth in it, is not from unchangeable things, which would settle the conscience in peace, but from changeable things, which leave room for continual doubting. Sense also looks at the fruits of faith, more than at the object of it; and if the believer has been misled, and taught to confound these two together, he will be at great uncertainty in judging of his state; for, instead of making the word of God, he will make his comforts the ground of his faith, and as these are, more or less, so will his faith be. When he has comfortable feelings, then he will think himself a believer, and when he has none, then he will think himself an unbeliever; changing his judgment of himself, as his feelings do, like the wind, and varying, as his comforts do, like

the weather. This is a common case; I have seen the sad effects of it in the lives of many of my acquaintance, who, from being taught thus to judge of themselves, were tossed about for several years up and down, now comforted then doubting, and could not get any solid establishment, till the word and Spirit of God convinced them, that sense was not to be the ground of their believing, nor the object to which they were to look. Sense judges by feeling, and reports what it sees. Sense says, Now I am in the favour of God; for I feel it. Now he is my God; for I find him so: I am comforted. Now he demonstrates it to me; for I feel nearness to him in prayer, and sweet answers. Now I am sure my duties and services are acceptable; for I am quite lively in them, and I come from them with warm affections. Now I cannot doubt; for I feel the assurance of his love to me.—And when sense has lost those comfortable feelings, then it draws contrary inferences. Now I am not in the favour of God; for I do not feel it. Now he is not my God; for I do not find him so: I am not comforted, &c. What can be the issue of this, but continual wavering and changing? For our feelings are sometimes more, some times less, as every believer experiences. What an unsettled state then must he be in, who has no way to judge of himself but by those changeable things! What room does he leave for continual doubting, and what trouble and misery does he thereby bring upon himself, as well as dishonour to the unchangeableness of God in his nature and promises!

If the poor weak believer should say, I am convinced of this, and I should be glad to have my faith

so fixed, that I might be freed from doubts and fears; then let it rest upon the word of God, which is the only ground of believing, and is therefore called the word of faith, upon which faith is built, and by which it is nourished and grows up. The believer should receive, and rely upon what God hath spoken, and because he hath spoken it; for his word changeth not. It abideth the same for ever; therefore, what it truly reports, stands upon an immoveable rock. Sense and feeling may report things contrary to it, but the believer can silence them with, "God has spoken it:" for his faith has evidence of things not seen, and he does not form his judgment by the things which are seen, but by things which are not seen. Generally speaking, faith judges the very contrary to what sense does, and will not believe what sense perceives. Abraham against hope believed in hope: so do all his children. They believe the pardon of sin, victory over sin, and the death of sin; the immortality of the body, though crumbled to dust and atoms; the second coming of Christ, and the eternal state of happiness or misery. Faith looks at God's word, calling the things which be not as though they were, and is commonly forced to contradict sense. Sense judges from what it sees —faith from what God says. Sense is governed by what appears—faith by what God says shall be. Sense looks inward—faith looks outward. Faith can answer the seeming contradictions which sense opposes to it, from the word of God, which cannot be broken. And when sense is ready to despair, and all its fine frames and feelings are gone, then it it is the believer's happy privilege still to trust in the

Lord, and to have a good hope because of the word of his grace.

But perhaps thou art ready to say, It is written, that there is great joy and peace in believing, yea, joy unspeakable and full of glory. True, these are what faith produces, and not what it is; these are the fruits of faith, which it brings forth in most abundance from the inexhaustible fulness of Jesus. The more simple the believer is, the more he eyes Christ the object of faith, and his word the ground of faith—the more clear and distinct will the actings of his faith be, and consequently it will bring greater peace into the conscience, and more joy into the affections. But still these fruits are not faith—no more than the fruit is the tree. The fruits do not go before faith, but follow it, and grow from it. This is God's order. He gives us his word to be the ground of our believing; and by believing, all things promised in the word are made ours: then we go on comfortably, and are happy: but when sense is put in the place of the word, then the consequence is, that weak believers have got a changeable rule to judge of themselves by, which hinders them from being established in believing, and from attaining the promised peace and joy.

Some may begin to object, What! are you against all lively frames, and sensible comforts? No, God forbid. I would have them spring from the right cause, that they might be more pure and fixed than they commonly are. God's word and promises are an unchangeable foundation to rest upon, even when sensible feelings are gone; because Christ revealed *in* the word, and laid hold of in the promises,

changeth not. Therefore, reader, for thine own sake, and for the glory of God, take heed what thou buildest thy faith upon. Beware of making any thing that sense reports to thee the ground of it, but rest it upon that which abideth for ever. The word of God is a sure foundation. It will never fail thee. Thou mayest safely depend upon it, because it cannot be broken; and steadfastly rely upon Christ to make its promises good to thee. There is thy object. Look at him. And since he is thine, thy Saviour and thy God, make use of him as such, and trust body and soul, and all things belonging to them, in his hands; and, among the rest, thy comforts. Be content he should give them to thee as seemeth him good. Set not thy heart upon them, nor follow him, as the multitude did, for the sake of his loaves and fishes, and the dainties that he gave them, who, when these were withheld, soon forsook their kind benefactor. Thou art by faith to make up all thy happiness in him, and in him only; and he himself being thine, let him give thee, or take away what he will besides, thou hast enough. What! is not this comfort enough, that thou hast got the pearl of great price, the infinitely rich, inestimably precious Jesus? He has the wisdom of God to contrive what is best for thee, boundless love to dispose him, and almighty power to enable him to give it thee, and he has promised it: canst thou desire more? Walk then with him by faith, and not by sight. When the word of God is the ground of thy faith, which rests there, and is grown to a fixed settlement, then thou wilt be enabled to go on comfortably, whatever thy frames and feelings be; yea, when these are at the lowest

word of righteousness. And being unskilful in it, signifies want of experience in the management of it —unskilful in the knowledge of the person of the Lord our righteousness, who is true and very God, as well as true and very man—unskilful in the nature of his righteousness, that it is absolutely perfect and everlastingly meritorious, so that any sinner, by receiving it, will be not only delivered from sin, and all the miseries due to sin, but will also be entitled to life and glory—unskilful in the gift of righteousness, how freely soever God bestows it, nothing being required to make it the sinner's but receiving it, and therefore it is called the righteousness of faith; because by faith he trusts in it for salvation, and for all its blessings in earth and heaven, and expects them as the fruits of righteousness—unskilful in experience, not knowing how to plead this righteousness against the charges of the law, of conscience, and of the accuser of the brethren; and therefore apt to fall into a legal spirit, to be distressed in their warfare between the old man and the new, and to covet and to rely more upon sensible feelings than upon the sure testimony of God in his word. These are some of the principal difficulties which young believers meet with, and they all arise from their unskilfulness in the word of righteousness; and therefore I have particularly considered some scripture motives for removing them out of the way. And after thou hast perused these motives, have they been the means of settling thy judgment, comforting thy conscience, and strengthening thy faith? Dost thou see more of Christ's grace and power to save thee, a sinner, than thou didst before, and therefore canst trust him

better, and in time of need make more use of his promised grace? If this be thy case, give him the glory, and may he carry thee on from strength to strength. But if thou hast received no improvement from reading thus far—what is the reason? Perhaps thou art under some of the temptations here described—search and see; and whatever it be, either in doctrine or experience, which hinders the increase of thy faith, may the Lord discover it to thee, and enable thee to overcome it, that thou mayest be no longer a babe, unskilful in the word of righteousness, but mayest grow up to be a young man, strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

The apostle Paul has directed me how to speak to the babes in Christ; and another apostle shows how they grow up to be young men, and thereby he furnishes me with matter for the second part of this 'Treatise on the Life of Faith.' "I have written unto you, young men," says he, "because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one:" 1 John ii. 14. These young men knew the principles of the doctrine of Christ: they were established in the belief of his Godhead, of the infinite sufficiency of his salvation, of the free gift of all its graces and blessings, promised to him that worketh not, and received by faith only, and all treasured up for the believer's use in the fulness of Christ Jesus, to whom he is to bring nothing to recommend him, but the promise of the grace which he then wants, and a dependence upon Christ to supply that want. These young men had attained to a great degree of knowledge *and experience in these truths.* They began to be

able to keep the evidence of their union with Christ clear and distinct, and to improve it by their communion with him in all his offices. But notwithstanding their establishment in these points, they had many temptations and great difficulties—still they knew but in part—still they had a fleshly corrupt nature to watch over and to fight against, always inclining them to trust to the law, to their feelings, to any thing but Christ, and always disposing them to yield to the suggestions of the devil, and to the allurements of the world. This warfare, instead of ceasing, grows hotter and hotter; but they grow stronger. It is the peculiar character of the young men in Christ to be strong; they have learned where their strength lies, and they put it forth. They go down to battle, not trusting in any power or might of their own, but great in the Lord, and in the power of his might. He is their strength. When the enemy cometh in like a flood, then to Jesus they look for safety and victory—"O our God, we have no might against this great company that cometh against us, neither know we what to do, but our eyes are upon thee." The abiding sense of their own weakness keeps them dependent upon him, so that the more they feel of their helplessness, the stronger they grow; because they live more upon Christ for strength,—which illustrates that seeming paradox of the apostle, "When I am weak, then am I strong"—when I am most sensible of my own weakness, then am I strongest in the Lord, his strength is then perfected in me; and his strength is put forth in the effectual working of it by believing. It is not, neither can it be, inherent in them,

who, without Christ, can do nothing, but it is brought in by faith; nor does faith bring it in to lodge it, or lay it up in store till it shall be wanted; but when it is wanted, faith then regards the promise, looks up to Christ to fulfil it, and receives strength out of his fulness; and being his, freely promised and freely given, it is therefore called the strength of grace. "Thou, therefore, my son," says Paul to Timothy, "be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." Strong faith gets strong grace in Christ, according as it is written—"All things are possible to him that believeth;" for, according to his faith, it shall be done unto him. If his faith reach to the full extent of the promises, he shall find all things possible which God has promised; yea, he shall be able to do all things through Christ strengthening him.

This is the life of these young men in Christ: they are strong in him, living upon his promised strength, and by faith receiving it—they live not upon any thing in themselves, but whatever they stand in need of, and whatever they have a promise for, that they expect shall be given them by the power of God their Saviour—they see themselves, poor helpless creatures, full of continual wants, and no means in their own power to supply them—the sense of this empties them of self-greatness and self-dependence, and the abiding sense of this keeps them humble and dependent upon Christ. Thus the Lord teaches them how to live out of themselves, and to be always receiving out of the Saviour's fulness grace for grace. They have his infinite storehouse to repair to, in which there is treasured up for them *every thing that they* can possibly want.

Happy for them, their God has promised to supply all their need out of the riches of his grace in Christ Jesus; and by faith they have an abundant supply, to the praise of that God who keepeth his promise for ever.

In him they live—he is the Lord and giver of spiritual life, as Paul says, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." They are made strong in him: "The Lord is the strength of my life," says the Psalmist,—that life which I live by the faith of the Son of God has all its strength from him.

And is continued by his power—"For none can keep alive his own soul:" Psalm xxii. 29. "It is God who holdeth our soul in life:" Psalm lxvi. 9.

And is kept by faith—"Ye are kept by the power of God through faith." Whatever strength the believer wants to enable him to bear hardship, endure the cross, fight his spiritual enemies, daily gain victories over them, he expects it from God, and through faith he receives it, and is kept—yes, so kept

As to be confirmed unto the end. He that is able to keep believers from falling, will keep them, until they receive the end of their faith, even the salvation of their souls. Thus the *life* which Christ begins by his grace, he continues by his strength; and every act of this spiritual life is from him. The will, the power, is his; for he doeth all, and in all. These young men were so well assured of this, that they lived upon Christ for strength, and they received it; they were strong in him. Their faith viewed him in his exalted state with all power in heaven and earth, and engaged as their covenant head

to use it for them, to make them, and to keep them alive to God. On this power they depended. And whatever promise they had of its being used in their behalf, they pleaded it at the throne of grace, and trusted Christ with the fulfilling of it, who never disappointed them. They were made strong, and stood fast in the Lord, who never withdrew his supporting arm; therefore they never ceased to put their whole trust and confidence in him.

When the enemy sees them thus strong in the Lord through faith, it stirs up his devilish malice, and makes him burn with envious rage. He leaves no temptation untried to draw them from Christ. He is well skilled in cunning wiles and sly devices for this purpose. He does not begin with tempting them to open sin; that would at once discover his wicked design: but he artfully tries to sap the foundation, and to weaken their faith. If he can get them from their dependence upon Christ, he carries his point; and too, too often he succeeds. O beware, reader, of every thing; suspect it, let its appearance be ever so fair and good, which in the least tends to weaken thy fast hold of Christ: cleave to him with full purpose of heart, as long as ever thou livest; for the enemy's whole plan is to separate thee from him. Formerly he tried to do this by distressing thee about thy sins—how they could be pardoned—whether, being so great, so many, the blood of Christ could cleanse from all: now thou hast through believing received forgiveness of sins, he will try to do the same by distressing thee about thy duties. Sometimes he will try to bring guilt into thy conscience, by suggesting to thee thy many fail-

ings and short-comings in them—the disorder of thine imagination—thy wandering in thy prayers—thy dulness in hearing and reading the word—the little life and power thou findest in thine attendance upon the ordinances—and the coldness of thy love to God and man. If he can get thee to dwell upon these things, so as to forget Christ, then he has made way for this insinuation—How could it be thus with thee, and thou a strong believer? And if he can get thee to reason upon it, then he has thee fast, thou art caught in his snare.

But if the Lord has taught thee not to be ignorant of Satan's devices, as soon as the thought arises, whether thou art in Christ, because of such failings, thou wilt know from what quarter it comes, and wilt immediately resist it: so that the temptation will make thee stand faster; it will drive thee closer to Christ; make thy dependence stronger on his blood and righteousness; put thee upon making more use of him as thy intercessor and advocate with the Father, and help thee to live more out of thyself by faith upon him. Thus Christ becomes precious, thou art more humble, the snare is broken, and thou art delivered.

When the enemy sees this, his implacable malice will soon tempt thee again. He has another deep-laid stratagem relating to thy duties; and that is, from their being unsuccessful. Thou hast had something laid much upon thy heart, and thou hast carried it to God in prayer, and thou hast waited long, but no answer comes. Upon this Satan takes occasion to suggest—Now you see God does not give you what you ask, although he has promised, Ask and ye

shall have: the fault cannot be in him, therefore it is plain you are not in his favour—his promises do not belong to you! And if he can thus work a little upon thy impatience, he will soon get thee into doubting and unbelief. Here thou mayest see how all the wiles of Satan tend to one point; namely, to separate thee from Christ: and how necessary then is it, that thou shouldst have this settled beyond all question, that Christ and thou art one. If this be maintained in thy conscience, then Satan's stratagem is defeated; for Christ being thine, he will give thee every thing that he has promised: and although thou hast it not just at the time thou hast fixed thyself, yet he knows best. Thou shalt certainly have it, if his infinite wisdom sees it good for thee; and if he does not see it good, his love will give thee something better. Thy faith must wait God's time. Strong faith can wait long. Having such a promise as this to depend upon, "They shall not be ashamed who wait for me," Isaiah xlix. 33. thou mayest with confidence wait, and be a follower of them who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises; who by faith regarded the promises, by patience waited for the fulfilling of them; and although they waited long, yet they succeeded at last, and did inherit every grace and blessing, for which with faith and patience they had been waiting. Go, and do thou likewise.

Upon the failing of these temptations, the enemy has another ready. Since he cannot get thee off thy guard by bringing thee into doubting and unbelief, he will attack thy faith in another way—he will come like an angel of light, and seem to be Christ's

friend and thine; he will allow thee to be a child of God, and to be strong in faith. The more clearly thou art satisfied of thy union with Christ, the more will he improve, if thou art not aware, this thy certainty to his own wicked purposes; he will try to keep thine eye upon thy graces and high gifts, he will flatter thee exceedingly upon them, and will tempt thee to view them with a secret delight, every now and then insinuating, what a great Christian thou art—how few there are like thee—to what an exalted state thou hast attained—what temptations thou hast overcome—what victories thou hast gained over Satan—and how safe thou art now, fast upon the rock! And if he finds this pleasing bait is not instantly rejected with a "Get thee behind me, Satan;" then he will begin to work upon thy self-love, and to give thee many plausible reasons for self-admiration, so that thou shalt first look pleasingly at, then fondly love, and at last sacrilegiously dote upon thy wondrous attainments. Thus he will lift thee up with pride, and will try to draw thee into his own crime, and into his own condemnation. What a dangerous temptation is this! How many have I known who fell into it! If thou sayest, By what means shall I escape it? Mind the first approach; for it is coming upon thee, as soon as thou beginnest to think of thyself more highly than thou oughtest to think. Thou art in thyself a poor, miserable, helpless sinner; and, to this very moment, without Christ thou canst do nothing. Thou canst not do one good thing, nor overcome the weakest enemy, nor take one step in the way to heaven without Christ; nay, thou canst not think one good thought

without him. What hast thou then to be proud of, and to stir up thy self-admiration? Nothing but sin. The humble abiding sense of this tends to thy safety; for while this is ever present with thee—"In me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing," it will lead thee to live by faith upon Christ for all good things; and being all his, and received every moment from him as his free gift, thou wilt be glorifying and exalting him in all and for all, knowing that he resisteth the proud, but he giveth grace unto the humble. The Lord keep thee humble, and then thou wilt have grace to escape this cunning wile of the devil.

If thou shalt say, Alas! I am fallen into it; how shall I recover myself? Remember his case who, in his prosperity, said, he never should be moved, the favour of the Lord had made his mountain to stand so strong: Psalm xxx. 6, 7. He was too confident in himself, and was moved. How did he recover his standing? "I cried unto the Lord, and unto the Lord I made my supplication. Hear, O Lord! and have mercy upon me. Lord! be thou my helper." His prayer was heard, he found mercy to pardon his offence, and help to raise him up; and his mourning, he says, was turned into joy and gladness. Look up, as he did, to the Lord Christ. Plead thy pardon through his promised mercy, and beg of him to enable thee to walk more humbly with thy God. Then shall the Psalmist's experience be thine, and thou shalt escape the snare which was laid for thy precious life.

These young men, having thus overcome the device which Satan had contrived to weaken their

faith, must expect a fresh attack from him. He will tempt them concerning the ground of faith. He sees they are strong, because the word of God abideth in them; therefore he will use all his cunning and power to weaken their trust in the word and promises of God. By the incorruptible seed of the word, faith is begotten; and by the same word, it is nourished up and strengthened, growing exceedingly from faith to faith. The word, which is the sole ground of faith, reveals the covenant made by the eternal Trinity for the salvation of sinners, and makes many free promises of every covenant blessing to him that believeth. These promises may most steadfastly be relied upon; because of the unchangeable nature of God who makes them. All his perfections are engaged for the fulfilling of his word; so that what he has spoken has an actual being and existence. He says, and it is done—saying and doing are the same with him. Let there be ever so great a distance of time between the word spoken and the thing done, yet this is as real as any thing now in being; because it exists in the mind and will of God, is revealed in his word, and by his faithfulness and almighty power is to be established at the time appointed. How is it possible, then, that this word should be broken? There is no matter of fact of more undoubted evidence, nothing in futurity, not even the rising of the sun to-morrow, so fixed and certain as the accomplishment of God's promises to him that believeth. These young men in Christ were most assuredly persuaded of this truth. They knew that heaven and earth should pass away, before one tittle of God's promises should

fail. They looked upon them all as made in Christ, in him Yea, and in him Amen—made in him, and fulfilled to him, as the head of the body of the church, and in him fulfilled to all his members. As certainly as every one of them has been made good to him the head, so will they be made good to his members. He has all the power in heaven and earth committed to him for that very purpose. Whoever by believing is joined to him, has thereby a right and title to every promise, and may boldly sue it out in time of need; and then it is Christ's office and glory to fulfil the promise. If mountains of difficulties stand in the way, the believer need not fear or doubt. Christ is upon the throne. What are difficulties against his almighty power? Besides, Christ has already given him good security. He has put into his hands the pledges and earnests of the promised inheritance, and how is it possible he should fail in fulfilling his engagements, and putting him in due time into actual possession? Read what the apostle says on this subject. Turn to the passage, for it is too long to quote, Heb. vi. from ver. 11. to the end of the chapter, in which you may observe these particulars:—

1. The heirs of promise are apt to be full of doubt, and to have strife in their consciences about the right and title to all the graces and blessings of salvation:

2. God was willing, out of his infinite mercy, to establish their right and title to them beyond dispute, and to put an end to all strife:

3. Therefore he engaged by promise to give them all those graces and blessings: and,

4. To show the unchangeableness of his will herein, he confirmed the promise by an oath.

5. It is impossible that God should lie in his promise, or that he should be perjured in his oath.

6. Therefore here are two immutable things to strengthen the faith and hopes of the heirs of promise.

7. While their faith rests upon those immutable things, it will always bring them strong consolation.

8. When enemies, dangers, and temptations attack them, they are safe by fleeing for refuge, to lay hold of the hope set before them in God's immutable promises.

9. This hope will be as useful to them at such times, as an anchor to a ship. By it they will ride out all the storms of life, until Jesus, their forerunner, bring them within the vail, where their anchor is now cast, and put them into eternal possession of all the promises.

With what rich and copious matter does this scripture abound, tending to show the absolute safety of resting upon God's promises! How strong are the arguments to persuade the heirs of promise, to put their whole trust and confidence in the faithfulness of their God! who, having provided an infinitely glorious and everlasting inheritance for them, was willing to make it over to them in the strongest manner of conveyance; and therefore, he has given them the promise and the oath of God, which cannot possibly change or alter, that their faith might never doubt or waver, and their hope might at all times be sure and steadfast. And, until he bring them to the inheritance itself, he has given them

many sweet and blessed promises of all things needful for their temporal and spiritual estate, upon which he would have them not only to live comfortably at present, but also to receive them as part of the inheritance, allowed them for their maintenance, till they come to age, and enter upon the possession of the whole. And what God intended in his promise and oath, has its effects in a good degree among those who have the word of God abiding in them. They cast their anchor where he commands them, and they are not only safe, but also, in time of the greatest troubles and temptations, have strong consolation. When enemies come, corruptions arise, and difficulties are in the way; they have a promise, and a promise-keeping God to depend upon. Whatever straits they are in, the word abiding in them brings some promise of support and deliverance; the promise shows what God has engaged to do, and faith receives the fulfilling of his engagements. When they draw nigh to God in duties, in ordinances, they know what he has promised to them that wait upon him, and they judge him faithful who hath promised, and, lo! he is present with them. In short, while they live like themselves as the heirs of promise, they are preserved from all evil, and want no manner of thing that is good. This is their happy case, thrice happy, because the means used to deprive them of their happiness are overruled of God for the establishing it. The enemy rages against them, but in vain. He was a liar from the beginning. The word is truth, and he abode not in it; therefore he hates it, and with a greater hatred, because the Lord has made it the means of

strengthening those believers: he knows that all his temptations will be fruitless, while the word abideth in them: he fears no weapon formed against him, like the sword of the Spirit; he has felt its sharpness and its power; with it the Captain of our salvation cut Rahab, and wounded the dragon; and with it all his good soldiers resist the devil, and make him flee from them. For these reasons, he has great variety of temptations to weaken the believer's trust in the word, and his reliance upon the promises of God.

Sometimes he attacks them in a matter where his hopes are founded on their ignorance: he is cunning to spy out the particular way in which they have been led, and their readiness to maintain their ground, by making use of the promises suited to that way; he resolves therefore upon some new temptation, with which they have never been exercised; and he watches the favourable opportunity to inject it with all his strength. Upon his doing it, the soul is put into a great hurry, because it has no promise ready to apply to the present case: for want of which, the understanding is confused, faith wavers, doubt enters, and Satan carries his point. This demonstrates the necessity of searching the Scriptures, and meditating upon them night and day. In them God has graciously treasured up all sorts of promises. There is not a possible case for a believer to be in, of spiritual or temporal concern, but there is a promise suitable to it, which he ought to have ready against the hour of temptation: if he has not, he neglects the Lord's kind provision, and lays himself open to the enemy's attack. Reader, if thou wouldst not be ignorant of

Satan's devices, follow Christ's counsel—"Search the Scriptures." Remember they are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith in Christ Jesus; therefore store up his promises—pray him to sanctify thy memory to retain them, and to enable thee to make use of them in every time of need.

If this temptation fail, the enemy will soon have another ready. I have known him often try, and often succeed in endeavouring to take off the attention from the most easy parts of Scripture, and to fix it upon those parts which are hard to be understood. Upon those the believer dwells too much, and puzzles himself: his head grows confused—he consults commentators, and they confuse him more. And if he does not fall from hence into questioning the truth of Scripture, yet he certainly neglects the right use of it, forgetting it is the means of building himself up in his most holy faith. Reader, whenever thou art tempted about difficult texts, look up to the incarnate Word, and pray him by his Spirit to open thine understanding, that thou mayest know what thou readest; and if thou still dost not find the meaning of them made plain to thee, pass them by for that time—do not puzzle and distress thyself about them—perhaps when thou meetest with them again they will appear easy, and Christ will give thee light to see and to comprehend thee.

If thou sayest, I do look up to him to teach me, but nevertheless I find many hard and difficult texts; remember, thou knowest but in part, and therefore thou standest in need of daily teaching: these texts are profitable, if they humble thee, and make thee live more upon the teaching of the divine Prophet.

The humbler thou art, thou wilt be the more teachable. The lower thou sittest at his feet to hear his words, thou wilt learn the most. The Master himself has declared, "Whosoever shall humble himself as a little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." If these difficult texts thus humble thee, and make thee live more upon Christ's inward teaching, they will be the means of thy growth in saving knowledge. Thy hearing and reading the word in a constant dependence upon him, will keep thee from the dangerous errors and heresies of the times. Most of those arise from unlearned and unstable men, full of pride and self-conceit, whom God resisteth; but he giveth grace to the humble.

If he has given thee grace to hold fast the form of sound words which thou hast learned, and been assured of, the enemy will change his attack, and pursue thee with new temptations. Envious of thy happiness, he will be often assaulting thee, and trying to move thee from thy steadfastness: he will at times insinuate every lie that he can raise against the word of God, and he will not begin with reason or argument, but by way of surprise, with sudden injections, darting into the mind doubts like these: 'How do I know the Scripture is inspired? What proof have I?' And if these be not immediately rejected, he will follow them like lightning with others: 'How can that be inspired, which is full of contradictions, and full of doctrines above reason? Who can defend the matters of fact related in it? The language is low and mean, unworthy of God—the Scripture is false—perhaps there is neither God nor devil.'

These blasphemous thoughts sometimes put the believer into a hurry and confusion, and, through the suddenness and violence of them, greatly distress him. The apostle calls these assaults, "the fiery darts of the wicked one;"—darts, because he throws them with all his might against the soul; and fiery, because he would have them to catch hold of, and to inflame its corruptions and lusts. And they do, if the shield of faith be not ready to stop their force, and to quench their fire. This is a piece of the armour of God, prepared for the believer's safety at such times, and the right use of it is this:—The Lord having promised to be a shield to them that put their trust in him, and to compass them about with his favour as with a shield, the believer looks up, when these fiery darts are flying thick about him, and says, 'O Lord God of hosts! who hast promised that thy faithfulness and truth should be my shield and buckler, now establish thy word unto thy servant. In thee, O my God! do I put my trust; save me in this hour of temptation.' Then the battle becomes the Lord's: he is engaged to put forth his strength to shield thee from the enemy. Thus thou shalt conquer, and shalt happily experience what is written—"Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

He will flee for a season, but will return again: he has other temptations, and he will try them all to disparage the word of God, and to lessen the believer's confidence in it. Sometimes he will insinuate —'How can these things be? In what way, or by what means, can such a promise be fulfilled?' If you begin to reason upon the point, he will get you

from your stronghold, and conquer you. Beware of his lies, and have always your answer ready—"It is written." What God hath said put your trust in, if all the world gainsay it; for he is faithful who hath promised, and all things are possible with him.

If this temptation does not succeed, and he cannot bring you to doubt of the truth of the promises, then he will try you about your right to them. When you are in darkness, or walking heavily, in sickness, or any trouble, and you have been praying for deliverance, but Christ does not presently answer you, then he has a favourable opportunity to suggest—'Now you see the promises do not belong to you, Christ will not hear you, and therefore you have been deceiving yourself with a vain notion of faith." This is a common temptation, against which still oppose—"It is written." Thy case, be it what it will, has a promise either of support or deliverance. If thou art not delivered, yet if Christ support thee, so that thy faith and patience fail not, does not this show his infinite goodness to thee? He will have thy faith tried, and he will put it into the fire, not to consume it, but that it may come, like gold out of the furnace, purer and brighter. And what if thou art in the fire a great while?—thou wilt see more of his tender mercies in keeping thee there, and wilt thereby learn to live in a more simple dependence upon him. Cast not away therefore thy confidence in the written word; the promises in it stand faster than the strong mountains. If all the powers in earth and hell should join, they cannot defeat one *single* tittle of them. When the world and all the

works therein shall be burned up, and the place of them shall be no more found, then the promises shall stand fast as the throne of God, and shall receive their full and perfect accomplishment through the ages of eternity.

These are some of Satan's temptations against the young men in Christ, who are strong, because the word of God abideth in them: his design is to weaken their reliance upon his promises. Till he can do this, he despairs of success; and therefore he tries every method which his wicked cunning and rage can invent. His busy, active spirit is night and day plotting against the word of God. See a lively picture of his utter hatred to it in the parable of the sower. While the good seed is sowing, the devil is indefatigable in picking it up—he exercises all his wiles to keep it out of the hearers' hearts, and he prevails with the greater part to reject it—among those who seemingly receive it, he cheats many, so that the word does not take root, nor bear fruit to perfection. Since Satan is thus successful, is it not absolutely necessary, reader, that thou shouldst be well acquainted with his devices? And the word abiding in thee, the ingrafted word, will both make thee acquainted with them, and also strong to resist them; because then thou wilt be taught by Christ's wisdom, and strengthened by his almighty power. As thou growest in the sense of thy want of him, and livest in a closer dependence upon him, thou wilt understand more of his word, and experience more of his power. By which means, the enemy's continual attacks, driving thee to Christ for the fulfilling of his promises, will make thee continually safe.

Let the roaring lion rage, what hast thou to fear? Let him go about seeking whom he may devour, the Lord is thy shield and thy defence: in him is thy trust. Thou hast his promise, that he will preserve thee from all evil, and will make all things, even Satan's spite and rage against thee, work together for thy good. How dear and precious then should the word of God be to thee!—if thou art weak, because it is the means of thy growing and being nourished up; and if thou art strong, because by its abiding in thee thou wilt be established. May it be thy study and thy delight, and may every reading of it bring thee to a better acquaintance with, and a greater dependence upon, the adorable Jesus. And if thou desirest thus to profit from the Scriptures, I would advise thee, reader, to observe two things, which will be much for Christ's glory, and for thy edification:—

1. In thy frequent and careful perusal of the Bible, (and mind, thou canst not read it too much,) take particular notice of the promises, which are most suited to thy age, state, and condition in life; because these God has graciously made for thy use, and about these the enemy will be most busy with thee. Treasure them up then in thy memory, and have them ready against the time of need, looking up,

2. To Christ for the fulfilling of them. All the promises are made in him, and made good by him; thou art therefore, in an humble dependence upon his faithfulness and power, to expect whatever thou wantest, and he has promised. Trust him, and he will not fail thee. Stagger not at any of his promises through the seeming impossibility of their be-

ing made good; but depend upon his almighty power, and thou wilt find him a faithful promise-keeping God, whose word standeth fast for ever and ever.

Thus thou shalt not only be safe, but shalt also overcome the wicked one, which the apostle John makes the last part of their character who are strong in the Lord. They overcome him by the strength of their faith; they hold fast their confidence in the Lord's promised strength, and he fights for them. That mighty arm, which bruised the serpent's head, brings them victory, as it is written of that noble army, mentioned Rev. xii. 11. "They overcame the accuser of the brethren by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony." Through faith in his blood, they were pardoned and justified freely, and they knew that in him they had righteousness and strength; therefore they were at peace with God, and the accuser of the brethren could not lay any thing to their charge. Thus they were delivered from his power, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son; and they testified this by adhering to the word of truth. They believed, that whatever Christ had therein promised he would fulfil to them, and they bore their testimony to their being safe in depending upon his word in the most trying circumstances. They would not give it up, whatever they lost for trusting to it: nay, they stuck steadfastly to its truth, although it cost them their lives for maintaining their testimony; for it is said of them, "they loved not their lives unto the death," that is, they loved the truth more than life; they were not afraid publicly to own, that their trust and confidence was in the blood of the Lamb, and they believed

they should be infinite and everlasting gainers by holding fast the word of their testimony unto death. And the Lord was with them, and mightily strengthened them, so that they joyfully sealed their testimony with their blood, although they died in flames, and in the most exquisite torments. Thus they overcame Satan. A most noble company of these conquerors are now standing round the throne of the Lamb, enjoying his exceeding great and precious promises: he has crowned them with glory—he has clothed them with robes, washed and made white in his own blood—he has wiped away all tears from their eyes, and taken all cause of sorrow from their hearts—he has put palms into their hands, to show that they are eternal conquerors, and that they shall stand confirmed in bliss for ever and ever. May thou and I, reader, ere long join them; and, until that happy time come, may our faith be daily more established in the blood and righteousness of the Lamb of God, that we may be growing in our love to him, and in our dependence upon him, until he admit us to see him as he is.

Through much exercise and fighting, these young men, strong and mighty in the Scriptures, grow up to be fathers in Christ; whose character is thus drawn by the apostle John, 1 Epis. ii. 14. "I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning," namely, Jesus Christ, whose style and title it is to be from the beginning, as he himself speaks in Prov. viii. 22, 23. "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was." He

was a person in the Godhead, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father, but was set up in his office from everlasting, to be the beginning of the ways and works of God. Upon account of what he was to do and suffer in man's nature, according to the grace of the covenant of the ever-blessed Trinity, he was the Creator, and is the Preserver of the Universe; for by him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, and by him all things subsist; and he is the beginning, the first cause of all things in nature, and also in grace, the head of the body the church. In the same manner our Lord speaks of himself: "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." He is in and from the beginning, being the first cause of all the divine works in creation, in providence, and in redemption, the Author and the Finisher, the First and the Last in all, which shows the great propriety of describing him here by this name. The apostle is treating of the highest state of a believer, and he says, it consists in knowing that Jesus Christ is all and in all. Whatever good there is in his kingdom of nature, from him it had its beginning, and by him it is preserved: whatever good there is in his kingdom of grace, he is the author of it; by his power it is continued; and, when brought to perfection, he is the finisher. He is the beginning, he is the ending, of all the counsels, and of all the works of God. In this light, these fathers had learned to consider the Lord Jesus; they knew that he was to do all for them, and in them, and by them; they not only knew

it speculatively, but had also experimental knowledge of it. "Ye have known him that is from the beginning;" have known him, and tried him, and found him to be what his name signifies. And this is the right knowledge of Christ—not such as the devil has: he could say, "I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God"—not such as too many nominal Christians have, who profess that they know God, but in works they deny him—not such as many professors attain, for whom it had been better not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they had known it, to turn from it. These fathers knew Christ by the inward teaching of his Word and Spirit, whereby he made himself known to them, as he does not to others: for he fulfilled to them the great promise of the new covenant—"I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the Lord; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God." The covenant is well ordered in all things and sure, particularly with respect to the quickening of the soul from a death in trespasses and sins, and to the renewing of its faculties, that they may be capable of knowing God; and to the enlightening of them, that the light of the glorious gospel of Christ may shine unto them, even unto the heart, enlivening it with holy and heavenly affection to the person, to the offices, and to the glories of the blessed Emmanuel. Whereby the believer, thus taught of God to know him aright, can now trust him, hope in him, and love him; which graces are strengthened from the consideration of God's standing related to him as his covenant God, and of his being one of God's redeemed people; from which relation he has a right to, and

by faith may enjoy every covenant mercy in time, and shall be a partaker of them all in eternity. This is the knowledge, concerning which so many and such great things are spoken in Scripture, and which St. John says these fathers had received: they had attained, by the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, to that knowledge of Christ which is life eternal; and the same Spirit enabled them to be continually growing and increasing in the knowledge of Christ. As he shines more clearly into their hearts, he discovers to them more of their wants. He makes them better acquainted with themselves, and lets them feel more of the workings of their corrupt nature, and of their own entire helplessness. Thus, by his light, they see deeper into that mystery of iniquity which is in them, and they grow in the sense and experience of it all their lives. Day by day some failing, shortcoming, infirmity, or temptation, leads them to more lowly and humbling views of themselves, and brings them fresh discoveries of their fallen and helpless state. While they attend to what is passing in their own breasts, every moment something will be speaking for Christ—"Without me ye can do nothing." It is this abiding sense of their wants, and faith in his promises to supply them, which lead them to be constantly looking unto Jesus. Many wants do not discourage them, for his promises are as many as their wants can be—nor great wants, for he has given them exceeding great promises—nor continual wants, for he has promised them grace every moment. As they grow in the knowledge of themselves, they see more need of living upon Christ in the several offices which he sustains. The daily experience

which they have of their own ignorance, and sinfulness, and helplessness, endear to them their divine Prophet, Priest, and King. The continual sense of their want of him makes them glad to live in a settled, fixed dependence upon his fulness, and to be always receiving out of it. They would not live otherwise, if they could. They know that their dear Saviour will manage better for them than they could for themselves: he has taken their affairs, spiritual and temporal, into his hands, and he can make no mistakes: his infinite love is guided by unerring wisdom, and its blessings are bestowed by almighty power. Happy for them, they and theirs are under the care of this best of friends. They know it, and are sensible of their happiness. Daily experience brings them fresh proofs of the love and power of Jesus; which makes them wish for more, still more faith, that they may glorify their blessed Saviour by trusting him more. However, in this they are growing, increasing day by day in their knowledge of the salvation, and gaining a closer acquaintance and fellowship with the person of God their Saviour, until they come to see him as he is.

This is the character of those believers who are steadfast in the faith, and are become fathers, able now to teach others also: they have attained to that knowledge of Christ which is life eternal, and they are daily pressing forward. What they already know of him increases their desire to know more; and by being always conversant with him, (for without him they can do nothing), they have continual opportunities of making new discoveries. In him are laid up treasures of every thing that is great and

good. His riches are unsearchable, infinite, and eternal; there is no coming to the end of them. Believers are persuaded of it, and therefore they try to dig deep into this golden mine. It is all theirs: the farther they go, the more is their faith strengthened, and the more precious Christ becomes; for they find such an excellency in the knowledge of Christ Jesus their Lord, that their souls hunger and thirst to know more of him. The more they attain, the more the appetite increases; and nothing can perfectly satisfy it, but the full enjoyment of Christ in glory, when they shall know, even as also they are known. Till that blessed time come, they will be growing in grace, and in the knowledge of God their Saviour.

This is the distinguishing mark of these fathers—they are pressing forward. They have not yet attained to the perfect knowledge of Christ, but they are going on to perfection; and they make a happy progress: God meets them in, and blesses the means which he has appointed for their daily growth. In those he requires them to depend, and to wait upon him; and he gives them clearer discoveries of the adorable person, and of the gracious offices of the Lord Christ, and thereby enables them to live more by faith upon him, for all things belonging to their temporal, their spiritual, and their eternal concerns.—These particulars will include the principal acts of the life of faith, and while we take a short view of them, may every page, reader, be the means of increasing and strengthening thy faith in the Lord Jesus.

1. They grow in the knowledge of his person, which is altogether *wonderful*, so that they can never

come to the end of his perfections; nor to eternity can they show forth all his praise; for he is God and man in one Christ—Jehovah incarnate—Emmanuel, God with us. This is the great mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh; in which he came amongst us, that he might be the second Adam, who is the Lord from heaven: that as the first Adam by sin had ruined all those who are born of him after the flesh, so the second Adam might save all those who are born of him after the Spirit. And for this end, he has all power in heaven and earth committed to him; he has all fulness, yea, the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in him, that he might be the head of the body the church, and that out of his fulness his members might be receiving grace in time and glory in eternity. Of this divine Person, all the prophets have spoken since the world began; and what they said in many words, the apostle sums up in a short description, where he is treating of that Person in the Godhead, who covenanted to come into the world to save sinners: "Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature: for by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence: for it pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell." In which words, these three glorious truths are declared of Christ Jesus: first, that he

created all things, visible and invisible; secondly, that he upholds them all by the word of his power; thirdly, that he has redeemed unto himself a peculiar people, through his own blood, who are his church; and he is to them what the head is to the body, the head of authority, the first in rank and dignity, and the head of influence, from whom life, and motion, and sense, are communicated to all his members: for in him they live, and move, and have their being. In all things he is first, or has the pre-eminence; he is Jehovah, the Creator and the Preserver of all things. Jehovah incarnate, the Head of his church, and the Saviour of the body. This is the blessed object of faith; and what can there be conceived beautiful, useful, or happy—what excellency is there, or perfection, which is not in its highest degree in this most adorable God-man? What can a believer want, what can his heart desire, which is not here treasured up for his use? Here is a surety perfectly qualified, as man, to act and suffer for man; as God, to merit infinitely and eternally by what he did and suffered; and as God-man he has now all fulness of wisdom and righteousness, and holiness and strength, and every thing needful for his people's happiness. Whither then should they go, but to him for every grace and blessing? And to him they do repair, according to the command—"Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." The promise to them who are looking unto him is very extensive—"My God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." By him they expect a continual supply of all their temporal and spiritual needs; and therefore on him they

would have their eyes ever fixed, looking unto Jesus. While by faith their eyes are kept steady upon him, they will be discovering something new in this wonderful God-man, and receiving something out of his fulness to strengthen their hopes, and to inflame their affections; he will grow more lovely in their sight, fresh beauties will discover themselves, new worlds of delight will appear; for all the glories of heaven and earth shine in their fullest lustre in his person. The believer sees them at present: for by faith he can see him that is invisible; and although he has not such a perfect vision as they have, who, standing round his throne, see him face to face, yet he hopes to enjoy it soon; and has even now this peculiar pleasure in viewing the glories of his God and Saviour, that he can truly say of him—"This is my Beloved, and my Friend;" here I fix, and on him I rest; I want to look no where else for any good, since it all meets and centres in one object: for it hath pleased the Father and the eternal Spirit, that all fulness should dwell in the Son of God, and he is my beloved Saviour, and my dearest friend; he is the Chief among ten thousand in my affection; yea, he is altogether lovely. The more I live by faith upon him, the more I love him; for I experience such tender compassion in his heart, and such a kind concern for me and my interest, that the love of Christ constrains me to love him again. He endears his person to me by continual favours. I do love him, but not so much as he deserves. I would increase, and abound more and more in love to him, as his mercies increase and abound to me; but a grateful sense of them, and love to him for them,

are his own gifts, for which, as well as for his mercies, I must be content to be indebted to him for ever and ever. Lord, shed more of thy precious love abroad in my heart; enlarge it in true affection to thee, and make all that is within me bless thy holy name.

Reader, stop a little here, and consider. Art thou one of these believers? Hast thou a warm heart for the person of Christ? Dost thou see in him, and in its highest degree, every thing that is lovely? and art thou growing and abounding in love to him? If this be thy present happiness, thou wilt find many powerful motives to increase it in the 45th and 72d Psalms. Read them, and see whether thou canst so mix faith with what is said in them of the incarnate God, as to conclude with David—"Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee!" If thy heart be thus enamoured with his love, then thou hast got a key to the book of Canticles; for thou art the spouse of Christ. Mayest thou experience what is therein said of the glories of thy heavenly Bridegroom, and mayest thou grow in love to his adorable Person, by finding continual tokens of his love to thy soul in the several offices which he sustains for the dispensing of his favours. In these offices, he is always endearing himself to his people.

2. This is the second thing whereby the fathers in Christ grow in the knowledge of him. There is not a want which sin has brought upon believers, but there is an office in Christ where it may be supplied: and the sense and feeling of that want, leading them to trust in him upon the warrant of his word and

promise, will certainly bring them a supply in the hour of need. His offices are many, but they may be all concluded in these five—He is the Saviour, the Prophet, the Priest, the King, and the Advocate of his people.

The SAVIOUR, Jesus, a dear name, descriptive of his infinite grace, and sweetly suited to the sinner's wants. Whatever pollution or guilt he has contracted, whatever misery he deserves to suffer in time or in eternity, Jesus is Jehovah, almighty to save him: for he was called Jesus, because he was to save his people from their sins. Whatever they stand in need of to make them happy—wisdom, righteousness, holiness, comfort, or strength—it is all, in the fulness of Jesus, freely promised, and by faith received, as it is written, "Ye are saved freely by grace through faith," and saved for ever; for Jesus the author of eternal salvation. The spirits of just men made perfect in glory, are said to be crying with a loud voice—"Salvation to our God, who sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever." So that the name Jesus is dear and precious to the saints in heaven; they are happily employed in ascribing the glory of their eternal salvation to the Lamb of God; and the believer has at present a part of their happiness, for Jesus is the Saviour. He can trust him for all the promised blessings of his salvation, and live by faith upon him for the receiving of them. As every moment some of them are wanted, so the Saviour's love in bestowing them is more experienced; faith in him is thereby strengthened, and love to him increased. And these graces will be continually growing, while the believer views

the state of guilt and misery from which Jesus has saved him; the state of safety in which he has placed him, and the blessings which he has promised him in life and death, and in eternity. Must not such a Saviour become more precious for continuing day by day such free and unmerited benefits? And who can receive them, sensible of his unworthiness, without rejoicing in such a salvation, and admiring and adoring the goodness of the Saviour? O most blessed Jesus! increase the faith of thy people, that they may glorify thee more by depending upon thee for all the promised blessings of thy salvation. Teach them how to do this, as the great

PROPHET of the house of God. This is another of his gracious offices, suited to the ignorance of his people; for when sin separated them from God, they then lost the light of life, and had no means left in their own power to discover God and the things of God. Hear what two infallible witnesses say to this fact—"There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God." Mind, here is no exception, the prophet knew not one; neither did the apostle—"All the Gentiles had the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts." To man, in this state of ignorance, what could be so suitable as a Prophet? And what Prophet like him, who, being God, is possessed of infinite wisdom, and, being God-man, has that infinite wisdom for his people's use? He was made unto them wisdom, that by his divine teaching he might enlighten their understandings, and by leading them into all truth might make them wise unto

salvation. He begins his teaching without discovering to them their ignorance, which is a hard lesson to learn; but he uses such mildness and gentleness with his authority, that by degrees he subdues their pride, and makes them willing to sit at his feet to hear his words. This is the humble posture of all his true disciples. They receive him by faith for their teacher, convinced that without him they can learn nothing which belongs to their peace; and having been for some time under his teaching, they grow more sensible of their want of it. He discovers to them more of their ignorance, and thereby brings them to closer dependence upon him for wisdom. And that is the way they rise in his school. Whoever is the most humble and teachable, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. The abiding sense of his standing in need of the divine Prophet every moment, makes him the highest scholar. And the Lord keeps him in this dependent state, waiting upon him for his continual instruction, in hearing and reading the word, and in prayer for the enlightening Spirit to make the word effectual. The great Prophet could teach without these means, but he has commanded us in the use of them to wait upon him; for in them he has promised to meet and bless his people, and for the fulfilling of this promise they wait. Christ's presence they look for in the use of all means, and they find it. He teaches them how liable they are to err, how little they know, how soon they forget, and thus they grow in a dependence upon, and in love to, their divine Teacher. And as all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are in him, and they can know at present but in part, they therefore

will be waiting upon him for more, still more knowledge; and he answers his character, he teaches them wisdom. He shows them dangers, discovers to them the devices of Satan, guards them against the errors and heresies of the day, makes manifest the snares of the world, and in all respects fulfils to them the office of an infallible Prophet; for he keeps them from resting upon any false foundation, and enables them to build all their hopes of acceptance with God upon the atonement made by the High

PRIEST of our profession, Christ Jesus. This is his chief office. He is our Prophet, to teach us our guilty, helpless state; and to bring us to rely upon him to save us from it, by being our Priest. We all have sinned, and have incurred the pains and penalties due to sin. We are all justly liable to the sufferings and death, to the curse and to the separation from God, threatened in his law to transgressors, and we have no means in our power to escape them. How full then of grace and love was the heart of our blessed Emmanuel, that he would vouchsafe to be a Priest to offer gifts and sacrifices for sin! His gifts were infinitely precious,—he gave himself for us, the gift of his eternal Godhead, the gift of his immaculate manhood, body and soul, in which he obeyed perfectly, and so magnified the law, that it may be eternally honourable in admitting those who have sinned into heaven—the gift of his prevailing prayer for all that shall believe in him to the end of the world—and the gift of his body and soul to be once offered for sin, in the place and in the stead of sinners, as it is written, "He suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us

unto God—He died for our sins according to the Scriptures—He was made a curse for us, that he might redeem us from the curse of the law, and that we, who sometimes were afar off, might be made nigh by his blood, and might through him have access by one Spirit unto the Father." In these most precious gifts, in this everlasting meritorious sacrifice, consist the office of our divine Priest; and upon him the believer rests. He is enabled, upon this foundation, to build all his hopes of acceptance. The great atonement made by Jesus' obedience unto death, is all his salvation and all his desire—all his salvation, for he looks no where else, but to Jesus and him crucified; he depends upon nothing else to save him from suffering and death, from the curse of the law, and from being eternally separated from God: and this is all his desire—to get a closer acquaintance, and more intimate communion, with the crucified Jesus. This is his one study and delight —'I have determined,' says he, 'to know nothing but Jesus, by whom I have now received the atonement. God forbid that I should glory, except in the cross of my Lord Jesus Christ. I would look upon all other things as dross and dung, compared to the excellency of the knowledge of that one offering, by which he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. In this his priestly office, bleeding and dying for me, he is beyond description, beyond conception, full of grace and truth; and daily he becomes more lovely in mine eyes. As I discover more of the exceeding sinfulness of my heart and life, my meritorious Priest grows more dear to me; I rest more safely on his atonement, satisfied

of its infinite sufficiency to bring me near to God. And finding my faith and hopes established in it, and through it a free access to the Father, Jesus, the sacrificed Lamb of God, becomes day by day more precious to my heart; his blood and righteousness are the continual rejoicing of my soul. Oh! how happy am I in this my royal Priest! for now, even now, have I redemption in his blood, the forgiveness of sins—I am safe from the destroying angel under the blood of sprinkling, and I have also boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus. Daily do I experience more of the riches of his grace, comforting, strengthening, and sanctifying me, through faith in his most precious blood. Through this he saves me from hell, through this he bestows upon me heaven, and for this shall be my song of everlasting praise. Unto him who hath thus exceedingly loved me, and hath washed me from my sins in his own blood, and hath made me, the vilest of sinners, a king and a priest (amazing grace!) unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.'

These are the breathings of the believing soul, now become well grounded upon the atonement, and living upon the priestly office of the Lord Jesus Christ for peace and joy, and expecting to be established in them continually by his power, which makes another of his offices necessary; for some corruption or enemy, temptation or trouble, will be always trying to draw the eye of faith from looking unto Jesus, the High Priest of our profession; and such is the believer's helplessness, that he could not be fixed a moment, were not Jesus a Priest upon his throne,

almighty to make all his enemies his footstool, and to rule in and over his people as their

KING. In this relation, he exceedingly endears himself to them; for they are in themselves weak and helpless. They are without strength to resist the least temptation, or to overcome the weakest enemy. They cannot of themselves subdue one corruption, nor get the victory over a single lust; neither can they perform one act of spiritual life. They cannot make nor keep themselves alive to God, by any power of their own; for without Christ they can do nothing. Most mercifully, then, is his kingly office suited to their weakness. He is the great King over all the earth, as God; but he has a peculiar rule in and over believers, as God-man, the Head of the body, the church; to which he is connected by as close and near a bond, as the members of the body are with the head. He is the first in dignity, as the head is, and in all things has the pre-eminence: and what the natural head is to its members, the same he is to the members of his spiritual body; for he is the Head, from which all the body, by joints and bands, having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God. And for the ministering of proper nourishment and influence to his members, he has all power in heaven and earth in his hand. He is the Lord God Omnipotent, whose kingdom ruleth over all. It is not an outward thing, like the kingdoms of the world; but, says he, "the kingdom of God is within you." He sets it up within, in the hearts of his people, and there he sways the sceptre of his grace, subduing all the evils within, and conquering all the enemies without,

It is from mine own mere love that I have determined to be gracious to them; and my love has determined to save them, and the way also in which I will save them. I have appointed the end and the means at the same time. Of mine own motion and good-will I have resolved to give my Son for them, and my Spirit to them, that they may repent and believe the gospel, and walk worthy of it; and so I may bring them, through my tender mercies, to eternal salvation. If this was not the case, how could the description be true, that mercy is from everlasting to everlasting? The mercy of God knows no variableness, nor shadow of turning. It is always the same. His fatherly heart ever entertained thoughts of mercy towards them: for when he shows them mercy, it is said to be according to the eternal purpose which he had purposed in Christ Jesus; not for their merits, but for his mercies' sake; not for what they have any claim to, but for his own name's sake. He gives all from mercy, and he would have all the glory returned to the mercy of the Giver. What he gives, that he continues, and according to covenant engagements. Covenant mercies are sure mercies: "I will make an everlasting covenant for you, even the sure mercies of the Beloved." They have already been made sure to him. He is now in full possession of every promised mercy. And he has received them, not as a private person, but as the head of the body, the church. He keeps them for the use of his church members. And as sure as the crown is upon his head, so surely will it be upon every one of their heads; for they are in the same covenant with him, whose sure mercies reach from eternity to

under it: it will be for my glory and for thy good it should be continued; because my strength is made perfect in weakness—the weaker thou art, the more will my strength be magnified in bearing thee up, until faith and patience have their perfect work. This divine answer from my Lord and King satisfied me, and I have for fourteen years had sweet experience of the truth of it. I am a witness to the all-sufficiency of Jesus' grace; but never have I found so much of it, as when I have been the most helpless in myself; and therefore most gladly will I glory in my infirmities and weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me, that his power may be continually glorified by my continually depending upon him for it; and that I may have fresh evidence of Christ's power working mightily in me. Since the Lord is thus become my strength, I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake, in whatever I suffer for him and his cause: for when I am weak, then am I strong,—weak in myself, strong in the Lord; stronger in him the more sensible I am of my own weakness, and then strongest of all, when, finding I can do nothing, I live by faith upon him to do all for me. In this state of weakness and dependence I glory, I take perfect pleasure in it; because it honours the kingly office of my Lord Christ, and makes it plain to myself and others, that he keeps me every moment by his almighty power; for, since I can do nothing, the excellency of the power which does all in me and by me, appears evidently to be of God, and not of man.'

Reader, is not this a happy case? Is not that

man blessed whose strength is in the Lord, and who can say in faith, Surely in the Lord have I strength? And what hinders thee from being as strong in the Lord as Paul was? Thou hast the same promises, the same God and Saviour to fulfil them; and, for thy greater encouragement to live upon him by faith, for the fulfilling of them to thee, he has another office, in which he condescends to be thy

ADVOCATE, freely to take thy cause in hand, and to see it carried in the court of heaven. In this character, he would represent himself, as having undertaken to answer all charges against thee, from whatever quarter they come, and to obtain for thee every blessing promised in his word, and for which thou appliest to him by faith in the time of need. In this amiable light, he would have thee to consider him as thy days-man, to whom, being thy Saviour and thy Friend, thou mayest safely refer thy cause; as the Mediator between God and man, who will transact all thy matters for thee with the Father; and as thy Intercessor, who appears in the presence of God for thee, that every blessing of his salvation may be thine. Under these names, the Scripture describes the advocateship of the Lord Christ, which office he sustains for thy sake, to encourage thee to come with boldness to the throne of his grace. Thou hast a friend there, who is bound by his word, and also by his office, to see that thou want no manner of thing which is good; and although all things seem to make against thee, and thou canst find no human means of obtaining the promised good which thou wantest, then look up to the Lord Jesus. Thou wilt glorify him at such a time, if thou canst trust

in his intercession, and if the workings of thy faith be such as these—

'Although I am less than the least of God's mercies, a vile sinner, and to this moment unprofitable servant, deserving for my very best works and duties to be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord; yet, glory be to his infinite grace, I have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous, and he is the propitiation for my sins. All the blessings which he has promised to give his dear people, as their Saviour, their Prophet, Priest, and King, he is my Advocate with the Father to obtain for me;—a righteous Advocate, who asks nothing but what he has a right to, and who never asks in vain. It hath pleased the Father, that all fulness should dwell in the Head of the body, the church; and it pleaseth him that the members should, from the fulness of the Head, receive abundantly all the influence they want; for the Father himself loveth them, and out of his infinite love gave his Son to be their head, that he might fill all in all of them. What then may not I expect from such an Advocate with such a Father? Already have I received so much, that I know Jesus appears in the presence of God for me. I can trust my cause in his hands. He has taught me to leave all my matters to his management, and I desire more simply to resign them up to him. I find every thing goes on well which is left to his direction, and nothing miscarries but what I undertake without him. O for more faith! The Lord increase it, that my precious Advocate may be more glorified by my trusting him more, and that he may have all the honour

of conducting my affairs, spiritual and temporal, in earth and heaven, in time and eternity: even so be it, Lord Jesus.'

After the believer has been taught thus to trust the Lord Jesus Christ, and to expect that grace which, in his several offices, he is engaged to give, then his conversation will be well ordered; and as he daily grows in faith and dependence upon Christ, he will walk more in the comfort of the Holy Ghost: his outward as well as inward matters will come under the influence of grace, and will be left to the direction and government of the Lord Jesus, which is another excellency of the life of faith, and which renders it infinitely preferable to any other way of living.

The state of the case is this: Christ has all power in heaven and earth given unto him: as God-man he has a mediatorial kingdom, which ruleth over all created beings and things; for they subsist by the word of his power, and are upheld by his providence; so that whatever, in his infinite love and wisdom, he sees best for his people, he is almighty to bestow it on them. They can want no promised good, nor suffer any outward evil; but he is able to give the one, and to deliver from the other. Their wants are many, their sufferings great. Sin has brought disorder upon the whole creation. The outward state of man in the world is full of misery, not only following him, but also in him, in his very frame and constitution—Pain, sickness, mortality in his body, emptiness in his enjoyments, disappointments, losses, worldly cares, something or other in body or estate troubling him; for man is born to trouble. What

manner of love then is this, that God our Saviour would take these things under his government, and manage them for the good of his people, whom he would have to be happy in him in this world, as well as in the next! He has given them many great and precious promises relating to the life that now is, and he is faithful who hath promised to supply their earthly wants, to sanctify their sufferings, and to make all things work together under him for their good. He has kindly undertaken their temporal, as well as their spiritual concerns; for nothing was left out of the covenant of grace. It was ordered in ALL things. The outward state and condition of believers, their poverty or riches, health or sickness, trials of every kind, how great they should be, how long they should continue, are all appointed, and unalterably fixed; nothing left for chance to do. When the Lord God determined to bring many sons into glory through Christ Jesus, the means by which he intended to bring them into that end, were in his purpose, as well as the end itself; and therefore all things were ordered and made sure, even to the very hairs of their head; for they are all numbered. What a continual source of comfort is this to believers! Their present happiness is provided for as well as their eternal, in the covenant of grace. God is become their God, has made himself known to them in this covenant-relation, and has thereby bound himself to give whatever he sees will be the best for them. But because he knoweth their frame, and how apt they are, under hard and long trials of faith, to be discouraged, he has therefore made them many sweet temporal promises for their support; lest they should

be weary and faint in their minds, he has engaged to deliver them from all evil. "Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all." He delivers two ways, either by entirely removing the affliction, or by changing its nature; for he takes the curse out of it, and turns it into a real blessing: he makes it the means of increasing faith and patience, sweetens it with a sense of his presence, and demonstrates that it comes from love, by its increasing love to him in the heart of the righteous. This is the best deliverance, as one of the greatest sufferers for Christ witnesses, who, upon the mention of his afflictions, declares, "Out of them all the Lord delivered me," by saving me from the evil that was in them, and by making them yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness.

The Lord has also engaged to bestow upon believers all good: "They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing." Their loving Shepherd will see that they lack nothing, no good thing will be withheld from them. To the same purpose are the promises in the New Testament. Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things, food and raiment, and all necessaries, shall be added unto you: I your God and Saviour give you my word for it; trust me, and you shall never want. With confidence did he believe it, who said to the Philippians, "My God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." What a powerful motive is here for the strengthening of our faith, that, be our wants ever so many, ever so great, our God has engaged to supply them all! We may boldly, then, cast all

our care upon him, since he careth for us, and may rest assured of his managing our whole outward estate infinitely better than we could for ourselves. What trouble, what burdens shall we be hereby eased of! What peace of mind shall we enjoy, when we can give up our temporal concerns into the Lord's hands, and by faith see them all conducted for our good, by his infinite wisdom and almighty love! Blessed, surely, is the man who thus putteth his trust in the Lord his God. He is delivered from the anxious care of getting, and from the fear of losing what he has got; he is easy about the present, the future he leaves to the Lord; his conversation is without covetousness, and he is content with such things as he has, and thereby he escapes thousands of the common troubles of life. In this sweet peace, he enjoys his soul; because the Lord has said to him —"I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee," in any state, in any want, or in any distress—I will be ever with thee to turn all things, seem they ever so afflicting, into real blessings. Trusting to this word, which cannot be broken, he may boldly say, 'The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man can do unto me: let the world persecute me, my trade fail, poverty pinch me, sickness pain me, friends leave me, and all outward comforts forsake me, nevertheless I am a happy man. The Lord Christ is my portion, my all-sufficient portion still, and these things being of his appointment are for the best: I find them so, glory be to him: He makes them the means of weaning me from the world, deadening the old man of sin, bringing me to a more intimate acquaintance with himself, and to a greater experience

of his goodness to my soul; whereby he enables me to trust all things for time and for eternity in his hands, who hath said unto me, and faithful is he that hath spoken, who will also do it, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."'

But some may say, 'Are there any persons who live thus above the world, freed from its cares, and fears, and troubles?' Yes, thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift; he has promised to make all things to work together for good to them that love him, and he has had witnesses in every age of his faithfulness in fulfilling his promises. Read that little book of martyrs, Hebrews xi. and you will see how happy they were in God, not only in prosperity, but also when the world was against them. Great were the triumphs of their faith; they chose to suffer affliction rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; they esteemed the reproach of Christ, and set more value upon it than upon riches and honour. And we have a great cloud of witnesses in the New Testament, who rejoiced that they were accounted worthy to suffer for the name of Christ, who blessed their revilers, prayed for their persecutors, and took joyfully the spoiling of their goods. Hear one of them speaking the sentiments of the rest: "I account all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and I do account them but dung, that I may win Christ." Still there are some among us of Paul's mind. The Lord hath not left himself without witnesses. We have a few names (may the Lord daily add to their number!) who can trust all their temporal affairs in the

hands of Christ, and who find the happiness of having them in his management. He does all things well for them: what would make them unhappy, he takes upon himself—"Cast thy burden on the Lord," says he, "and he shall sustain thee:" and he does sustain the weight of it, and thereby frees them from anxious care, and gives them sweet content. They have enough, let them have ever so little of outward things, because they have got the pearl of great price. Christ is theirs, and the Spirit of Christ enables them to make up all their happiness in him, and not in the things which perish in the using. Christ, with bread and water, is worth ten thousand worlds; Christ, with pain, is better than the highest pleasures of sin; Christ, with all outward sufferings, is matter of present, and of eternal joy. Surely these are the only happy people living. Reader, art thou not one of them? Art thou not a partaker of their happiness? If thou art a believer, it is thy privilege; thy title to it is good, and thou enterest into possession by faith; and if it be so weak that thou art not so happy as they are, thou shouldst take shame to thyself for dishonouring God thy Saviour, for robbing him of his glory before men, and for injuring thine own soul, by not committing all thy outward matters unto his guidance. What could he do more than he has done to encourage thee to leave them to him, that he might manage them for thee? He has given thee argument upon argument, promises in abundance, bonds which cannot be broken, immutable things, in which it is impossible that God should lie, to convince thee that thou mayest safely trust in him for all temporal

things, which he knows will be for thy good. O! pray then for more faith. Beg of the Lord to enable thee to walk more by faith, and less by sense, that thou mayest commit thy way entirely unto him, and he may direct all thy paths. The more thou trustest in him, the happier he will make thee; therefore daily entreat him to deliver thee from taking any anxious thought for thy life, what thou shalt eat, or what thou shalt drink; or yet for thy body, what thou shalt put on: since he knoweth thou hast need of all these things, and hast sent thee to the fowls of the air, and to the grass of the field, to see what a rich provision he makes for them; art thou not much better than they? O! pray still for the increase of faith, that all thy worldly matters being resigned, and given up into the hands of the Lord thy God, thou mayest be eased of many weights and burdens, and mayest run with more patience and joy the race that is set before thee.

As these fathers in Christ learn, by daily experience, to live more upon him for the bread that perisheth, so do they for the bread that endureth unto everlasting life. They attain to a fixed, settled dependence upon Christ for the conducting of all things belonging to their state of grace, to their comfortable walk in it, and to their finishing their course happily. They grow in the knowledge of those blessed truths; are more grounded and better established in them; and these being received and enjoyed by faith, do manifest the excellency of living by it above any other state, except that of glory.

1. They are pardoned and accepted in the Beloved—in him made partakers of every covenant-

mercy: for he was made of God unto them wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. His whole salvation is theirs. And this is their state of grace, into which he has brought them, and by faith put them into the present enjoyment of it.

This was largely treated of before, but cannot be too much insisted upon, both because there is growth in the knowledge of the covenant, and clearer evidence daily to be had of the believer's interest in it, and also because the love, and wisdom, and mercy in contriving, the power in executing, the grace in applying, the blessings of the covenant, are all infinite. The height and depth, the length and breadth, of those divine perfections, cannot be fully comprehended. They surpass knowledge; so that if a believer knows a great deal of the way of salvation, yet there is still more, far more to be known. So long as he lives, he must be learning, waiting upon the divine Prophet for his inward teaching, and he will become more dependent upon him the more he learns; for the wiser he grows, the clearer views will he have of his having attained as yet but little wisdom, which makes him press forward. He believes that all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are laid up in Christ, and he longs for more knowledge of his gracious undertakings, of his adorable person, and of his full and free salvation; he follows on to know the Lord; he advances from one degree to another, from faith to faith, and is not satisfied with any discovery, until that which is in part be done away, and he shall know even as also he is known.

The believer, being thus satisfied that he is in a safe state, looks up to the Lord to keep him, and to

In the law of works there was no provision made for a surety; but it did not absolutely exclude one: therefore it left room for the covenant of grace, in which a provision was made in the person of Jesus Christ, for securing the divine honour of this holy law. He undertook to stand up in man's place and stead, to magnify the precepts of the law in his life, and to glorify the penalties of the law in his death, that not one jot or tittle of it might fail till all was fulfilled. And as he was God over all, blessed for ever, his life and death put everlasting honour upon the divine law. His obedience was of inestimable value, and his sufferings were infinitely sufficient to take away sin. Christ is now the end of the law for righteousness. He answered the end of the law for his people, by obeying and suffering for them. And every one of them can now plead by faith a perfect fulfilling of all the precepts, a perfect suffering of all the penalties in the person of their divine Surety. God the Father is faithful and just to his word and engagements with his Son: he has made known his will in the immutable record of his grace, "That whosoever believeth in Jesus should not perish, but should have everlasting life." How can he perish? Jesus died for him. He shall live with God in everlasting life; because Jesus lived for him. And this is the declared will of the Father concerning all that believe in his only-begotten Son.

Remember then, O my soul, that thou art not under the law, but under grace. Thou art saved from the law, under the form of a covenant of works. Thou art not bound to keep its precepts, in order to have life for thy obedience. Thy surety under-

that now they never dare go down to battle, but with their eyes upon the Lord. He has taught them to depend wholly upon him for the crucifying of the old man of sin day by day; and in the power of his might, armies of lusts are made to flee before them. The Captain of their salvation encourages them to fight on, not only by subduing sin in them; but also by making this the earnest of their having in him an absolute mortification of sin. By faith they see it, and his victorious grace will never leave them, until he put them into full possession of it. Thanks be to God, through Jesus Christ their Lord, ere long they shall have perfect and everlasting victory over the whole body and being of sin.

2. And as the old man is thus crucified, so is the new man quickened by the power of Jesus received by faith, according to what is written, "The just shall live by faith." The justified person, by his union with Christ, is a partaker of the grace of life; and in virtue of this union, he lives upon Christ as a member does in the body, and thereby he has communion with the Father by the bond of the Spirit; and this spiritual life is begun and carried on by faith: it is a life of faith, not as if faith quickened a dead sinner; for Christ is our life. But the sense, and comfort, and strength of that life which Christ gives, are received by faith; and these are according as faith is. If faith be weak, so are they. As it grows, so do they. Which discovers to us another wonderful excellency of the life of faith, since by it we now partake of spiritual and eternal life: "For he that believeth hath everlasting life;" hath it now, is already passed from death unto life, and he looks up to the

Lord and Giver of it for every thing needful, and expects it out of his fulness. Hear one of these happy believers thus relating his case:—'I am dead to the law,' says he, 'yet alive to God; I am crucified with Christ, and am a partaker of the merit and power of his cross, and by faith I have in him an absolute crucifixion of sin: and although the old man is thus crucified, yet the new man liveth: nevertheless I live, yet not I—I live a spiritual life, yet not I as a natural man; I did not quicken myself, I cannot keep myself alive. Christ liveth in me, he is the author of my life, and on him I depend for the continuance of it in time and in eternity: for the life which I now live in the flesh, while I am in this body of sin and death, I live by the faith of the Son of God; he is the Author, he is the object of that faith, by which I have received life from him: by an act of sovereign grace, he quickened me from a death in trespasses and sins, and united me as a living member unto his mystical body, and I am kept alive through his living, acting, and working in me by his Spirit; he dwelleth in my heart by faith, and the more clearly I see this, the more do I love and enjoy the Prince of Life, my precious, above all expression, infinitely, eternally, precious Jesus, who loved me, and gave himself for me, that by his death I might be dead to sin, and by his resurrection might live to and with God for ever and ever. Thanks and praise be to thee without ceasing, thou dear Lamb of God, for thy love to me, the chief of sinners. Let all thy people say, Amen.'

This is the happy case of those believers who are, like the blessed Paul, strong in the Lord Christ.

By his death, they are dead to sin, and because he liveth, they are alive to God; for they who are joined to the Lord are one spirit. And as their faith increases, they have more spiritual fellowship with Christ in his death and resurrection, not only in the merit, but also in the efficacy of both; they grow more dependent upon the Lord's strength, and he daily mortifies in them the old man of sin; and as he grows weaker, their other enemies have less power over them. By their lusts, Satan tempts them: the more these are mortified, the weaker will be his temptations. By their lusts, by the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, the world tempts them: as these are subdued, they will be more crucified to the world. Christ living, dwelling, and reigning in them by faith, will day by day weaken the strength of sin and Satan, and the world; and by the power of his death and resurrection, he will be conforming them more to his own image and likeness. He will by faith enable them to be growing up into him in all things, as long as they live: they will be going on from strength to strength, till sin and death be swallowed up in victory.

Until that happy time come, he has appointed certain means, in the use of which they are to wait for the continual receiving of grace from him to deaden the old man, and for the growth of the new. And this grace they receive, not merely because they use the means, but because they use them in faith, expecting his presence in, and blessing upon them. Believers set the Lord always before them, and look through the means at him; for without him they are good for nothing: but when observed, according

to his mind and will, as acts of trust in his promise, and of dependence upon his faithfulness, they then answer the end for which they were instituted, and become the means of spiritual communion with him; and thus legal duties become Christian privileges. One of these means is attendance upon public worship, the ground and reason for which is Christ's promise—"Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Two or three believers make a church, when they are gathered together in the name of Christ's divinity. By faith they expect the fulfilling of his promise, and his presence in the midst of them; and they are then most spiritual worshippers when they are looking most unto Jesus, and enjoying communion with him. What are their prayers, but acts of faith and dependence? "Whatever ye shall ask," says Christ, "in my name, believing, ye shall receive." Which words show us, that prayer is nothing worth unless it be presented in Christ's name, and in faith relying on Christ's promise to hear and answer. The object of prayer is the Godhead in three persons. The address to each is in their covenant-offices, and the petitions to each should be according as they stand related to sinners in these offices; and the communion with the divine Persons is thus expressed—"Through Christ Jesus we have an access by one Spirit unto the Father;" and whatever we ask, believing, we receive. What is believers' hearing the word? Is it not a continual dependence upon their divine Teacher to make his word spirit and life unto their souls? They expect his presence to enable them to mix faith with what they hear, and

then they grow thereby. What is their keeping the Lord's day? Is it not to express their belief of his being risen, and entered into his rest, and of their having, by believing, entered into rest also? and therefore they wait upon Christ in the ordinances, to keep them until he bring them to his eternal sabbath, to that rest which remaineth for the people of God. What is their attendance upon the Lord's supper? Is it not the communion of the blood of Christ, and the communion of the body of Christ, a real partaking by faith of his broken body, and of his precious blood-shedding, and of all the benefits of his passion? In these and all other ways of God's appointment, they expect Christ's presence, and therefore they go to them with gladness of heart to meet him. He is the dear object of their love, and he grows more lovely by every day's experience. They taste, and see more how gracious he is; and therefore, to converse with him in prayer, and to be in his company in the ordinances, becomes more sweet and delightful to them. Oh! what happy moments do they therein spend! All the great, rich, and pleasant things in the world are less than nothing compared to this joy. Communion with Christ is heaven begun; and by faith they enjoy it, and nothing can rob them of it but sin; which makes them careful in their life and conversation to please their gracious Lord: they depend upon him to teach them his will, and to give them strength to perform it, that they may walk before him in all well-pleasing. Whatever is opposite to his will they dread, because it would deprive them of their greatest blessing, even communion with their best and bosom Friend. Sin,

viewed in this light, is blacker and viler than all the devils in hell. The love of Christ shows sin in its exceeding sinfulness; and faith, working by love to Christ, gains daily victory over it. He who has the love of Christ in his heart, will be thereby sweetly constrained to fight against, and powerfully enabled to conquer sin; so that it cannot separate him from his beloved Saviour, nay, it shall make him live in closer and nearer connection. The motions of sin within, and temptations without, to which he is continually liable, will show him the necessity of living in a settled dependence upon the grace and strength of the Captain of his salvation, who will lead him on conquering and to conquer, until he make him at last more than conqueror.

The same faith, working by love, has gained the hearts and affections of believers over to the interest of holiness, and the commandments now cease to be grievous. Love to Christ, who is perfect righteousness and holiness, cannot consist with the hatred of either; nay, they are renewed after his image in both, and renewed in knowledge, that they might know his precious image, and renewed in heart, that they might love it; therefore, being thus created anew in Christ Jesus, they will certainly, in the inner man, delight in righteousness and true holiness. He has shed his love abroad in their hearts, has won them to himself, and now nothing is dearer to them than that everlasting righteousness by which he justifies them, and that true holiness of which they are become partakers in him, which they evidence by a holy walk, and in which he will present them holy, and unblameable, and unrebukeable, before the Father. Thus

he has perfectly secured the interest of holiness, and the glory of the most holy God; for they are his workmanship, created unto good works, to love them, to do them, to walk in them as the way to the kingdom; and they live by faith upon Christ's strength for will and power to do them, and upon his intercession for the acceptance of them, laying them all upon the golden altar that sanctifieth the gifts. Thus their whole dependence is upon Christ. He is all and in all of their Christian walk. To him they look for every thing needful to enable them to glorify God in their lives, and to show forth the virtues of him that hath called them; on his grace they rely, that their conversation may be as becometh the gospel of Christ, and that they may adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour in all things: and they find in him a sufficiency of grace, yea, they can do all things, and suffer all things, through Christ strengthening them. Whatever difficulties they meet with in the way of duty, leaning upon their Beloved, he carries them through all,—whatever temptations, I will be with thee, says he, in the hour of temptation; look unto me, and thou shalt be saved,—whatever enemies, Fear them not, says he, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness,—whatever sorrows, Your sorrows, says he, shall be turned into joy, and your joy no man taketh from you,—whatever sickness, I will strengthen thee upon the bed of languishing, and I will make all thy bed in thy sickness,—whatever poverty, I will be a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress,—whatever per-

secution, Blessed are ye, says he, who are persecuted for righteousness' sake; I pronounce to you, I will make you blessed. Thus Christ is with them, and none of the evils or miseries of life can separate them from him. He keeps them safe, and carries them through all their trials by his mighty power; and they, trusting in him, find that he makes all things work together for their good.

What a blessed life is this! Surely there is none like it; for the life of faith is glory begun: the privileges, the happiness of it, are greater than can be described. The strongest believer upon earth may daily know more, and may experience far more, of the comfort of walking by faith; because, as they grow more established in it, they will be receiving more power over sin, and will walk nearer to God. Having but one object to look unto, and to live upon for all things, here they will be quietly settled. What can so effectually keep them from being tossed to and fro, as to have all fulness treasured up for their use in Christ, and to be brought to a fixed dependence upon this fulness, and to live upon it for all things belonging to life and godliness? Hereby sweet peace will be established within, and there will be a regular walk in the outward conversation: the whole man will experience what the Lord has promised to his redeemed people: "I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble." He leads them by his Spirit, and causes them to walk by the rivers of waters, where there are abundant streams of grace continually flowing; and he guides them in a straight way, that they shall not stumble nor err therein, but shall be kept

happily to the end of their course, and shall finish it to their everlasting joy.

And this is another inestimable privilege of believers. Christ has engaged to keep them unto the end; and having begun a good work in them, he has promised never to leave it until it be finished. What a strengthening is this to their faith, and what a glory does it put upon the whole life of faith, that it is a life which cannot perish! Believers have in them the immortal seed of eternal life. This is the crown of all: for how will this bear them up under crosses, support them in troubles, carry them on in their warfare against the flesh, the devil, and the world, and make them defy all dangers, yea, death itself, since they are assured, from the mouth of God their Saviour, that none shall pluck them out of his hands! They do not trust to themselves, or have any dependence upon grace received, but they rely upon the faithfulness and power of Jesus, who has given them abundant evidence that he will water them with his grace every moment, and hold them up by his strength, and they shall be safe. How confident were believers of this in the Old Testament! One of them, who had attained this assurance of faith, says, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life:" and he, with many others who had obtained like precious faith with him, declare, "This is our God for ever, he will be our guide even unto death." They were sure he would be their God, and would follow them with mercy, and guide them, and do them good in life and death.

To the same purpose our Lord has promised believers, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them,

and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." How confidently did he trust in Christ for the fulfilling of this blessed promise, who said, "I am fully persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord!" Oh! sweet words of comfort! how happy was Paul in this assurance of faith! It is thy privilege, believer, as well as his. Thou hast the same promises that he had, the same God to fulfil them, and thy faith ought to be growing, until thou be assured that no creature, not all the powers on earth, nor the gates of hell, can separate thee from Christ. They may as soon get into heaven, and cut off Christ's right hand, which is impossible, as cut off one of the members of Christ's mystical body.

If thou art ready to say, 'I see clearly how I should glorify my dear Lord, and how happy I should be if my faith was but like Paul's in this point; but I am so weak, and liable to fall, and mine enemies so numerous and mighty, that I sometimes fear I shall never be able to hold out unto the end.' Because thou art such, therefore the Lord has given thee his promise that he will hold thee up, and thou shalt be safe: and this promise is part of the covenant, which is ordered in all things and sure. Look at that, and not at thyself.

Consider the Messenger of the covenant, in whom it is all ordered, and by whom it is sure. When thy

unfaithfulness would discourage thee, think of his faithfulness. Let thy weakness remind thee of his strength. If indeed he leave thee a single moment, thou wilt fall; but he has promised, I will never leave. If the number and strength of thine enemies make thee fear lest thou shouldst one day perish by the hand of Saul, he says to thee, "Thou shalt be kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation." But if thou art tempted to doubt, finding thy revolting heart apt to turn from the Lord, "I will put my fear," says he, "into thy heart, that thou shalt not depart from me." Observe, it is his faithfulness and power, and not thine, which is to keep thee, and has covenanted to do it, and he has all power in heaven and earth, and he has given thee promise upon promise for the establishment of thy faith, that thou mightest be certain he will love thee, and keep thee unto the end: and when he has brought thee to a certainty of it, then thy comfort will be full. Christ will be magnified in thee, now he has made thee one of those fathers who have known him that is from the beginning. He has taught thee so to know him, as to trust him for all things, and in all times: this is his crown and glory. He has enthroned himself in thy heart, as thy perfect Saviour, and his kingdom is within thee, even righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. Now thy calling and thy election is sure. Thou knowest that he is faithful who hath promised to keep thee, who also will do it. And having this assurance of faith, attended with the rejoicing of hope, and being sealed with the blessed Spirit to the day of redemption, surely thou art a *happy man, thrice* happy, whom the Lord hath thus

highly favoured. How infinitely indebted art thou to his grace! Oh, what thanks and praises dost thou owe, more than thou canst ever pay, for what he has already done for thee! and yet this is only the dawning of the perfect day. His present favours are only earnests and pledges of what he will hereafter give thee; therefore still trust in him, and he will enlighten thee more by his word and Spirit, he will enliven, strengthen, and establish thee more. Thy faith will daily rest more assuredly upon him, the joy of thy hope will increase, thy love will yet more abound: he will guide thee by his counsel in an even course, and will receive thee into glory.

Thus have I treated, as I was able, of the safety and happiness of living by faith upon the Son of God, and have described the common hinderances which stop its growth, and the victory over them which the Lord gives his people. I have been forced to be very short, and could only throw out some hints upon this copious subject. May the good Lord pardon what is amiss, and bless abundantly what is according to his mind and will. If thou hast followed me, reader, in thy experience, and art indeed a happy believer, living upon thy blessed Jesus for his promised heaven, and for all things promised to thee in the way thither, think what a debt thou owest him! how dear and precious should he be to thy heart! He has saved thee from all evil—he will bless thee with all good. As surely as thou hast the earnest, thou shalt have the purchased possession. Oh, what a Saviour is this! he has already bestowed upon thee the exceeding riches of his grace; but how great will be the riches of the glory which he will give thee!

Thou wilt soon see him as he is, and then thou shalt be like him. No tongue can tell how great that glory will be—not all the tongues in heaven, after the number of the elect shall be perfected, no, not after they have enjoyed it for millions of ages; never, never will they be able to show forth all his praise for making them like himself. Surely then, whilst thou art waiting for this glory which shall be revealed, thou wilt be going on from faith to faith, that thy beloved Saviour may become dear to thee; and that thou mayest have more close and intimate communion with him. Every day's experience should bring thee to love his appearing more. Having tasted how gracious he is, thou shouldst be longing for the marriage-supper of the Lamb with fervent desire. And being now a father in Christ, and strong in faith, thou wilt be often looking up to him, and saying,

Make haste, my Beloved, and take me to thyself—let me see thee face to face, and enjoy thee, thou dearest Jesus, whom my soul longeth after. It is good to live upon thee by faith, but to live with thee is best of all. I have found one day in thy courts, conversing sweetly with thee, better than a thousand: but this has only whetted my appetite; the more communion I have with thee, I hunger and thirst still for more. My soul panteth for nearer, still nearer communion with thee. When shall I come to appear before the presence of God? O thou Light of my life, thou Joy of my heart, thou knowest how I wish for the end of my faith, when I shall no longer see through a glass darkly, but with open face behold the glory of my Lord. Thou hast so

endeared thyself to me, thou precious Emmanuel, by ten thousand thousand kindnesses, that I cannot be entirely satisfied, until I have the full vision and complete enjoyment of thyself. The day of our espousals has been a blessed time. O for the marriage of the Lamb, when I shall be presented as a chaste virgin to my heavenly Bridegroom! How can I but long earnestly for this full enjoyment of thy everlasting love! Come, Lord Jesus, let me see thee as thou art; come, and make me like unto thee. I do love thee, I am now happy in thy love, but not so as I hope to be. I am often interrupted here, and never love thee so much as I desire; but those blessed spirits standing now round thy throne are perfected in love. O that I was once admitted to see, as they do, the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ! Is not that the voice of my Beloved, which I hear answering, "Surely I come quickly?" "Amen," say I, "even so, come, Lord Jesus." "Make haste, my Beloved, and be thou like to a roe, or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices."

Are not these, believer, the breathings of thy soul? Since the time for them is short, may they grow warmer and more affectionate every day! Thou wilt wait but a little while before thou shalt see the King in his perfect beauty, and thou shalt be a blessed partaker of his eternal glory. And if he make these few lines any means of bringing thee to see more of his beauty at present, to live more upon his fulness, and to be happier in him, I hope thou and I shall, through his grace, meet him soon, and give him to eternity the glory of this and of all his other *mercies*. *To the Lord* I commend thee, on

failing conformity to it: for the will of God doth bind all men on earth, and angels and glorified spirits in heaven. It is an unchangeable law, obliging for ever all the creatures to obedience, not only on account of the matter contained in it, but also with respect to the sovereign authority of the almighty Lawgiver. And this obligation, Christ in the gospel has not in the least dissolved, but on all occasions has confirmed and strengthened. How decisive are these words: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil:" to fulfil the law in mine own person, as the surety for my people, and to put the love of it into their hearts, and to engage them, and to enable them to practise it in their lives; though not for the same end for which I fulfilled it.

Duty is always one and the same—a debt always due to God. But the debt of obedience being withheld, and the death of suffering being incurred, the believer is taught to plead his discharge from suffering under Christ, and his fulfilling of obedience in the righteousness of Christ. With this faith he has a delightful prospect of duty. God is now at peace with him. God loves him in his Son. It is his high privilege to enjoy the sense of those distinguishing favours. For this end he is admitted to walk with his God. What an honour is this! Having received the adoption of sons, he is blessed with his Father's love, and is taken into near fellowship with him. What a happiness is this! "Son, all that I have is thine, it is freely given to thee in Jesus; and thou art now called upon to enjoy me and mine in thy holy walk." Here duty be-

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law motives; neither expecting the promised life on account of keeping the precepts, nor fearing the threatened penalty on account of not keeping them. It is his privilege to obey, because he is saved. He works from a free spirit, and with a thankful heart. He does all his duties in faith. He is spiritual in them, acting upon the endearing motive of God's love to him in Christ, as it has been revealed to his heart by the Holy Spirit. He hopes for the acceptance of them only through the intercession of Christ: and after he has done them ever so well, he desires grace from Christ to return him all his glory. Thus, in every duty, he aims at fellowship with God in Christ through the Spirit, and seeks to present an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God.

Whatever thou art required to do, remember, O my soul, that thou art under grace, and it is thy privilege to do it in faith. View the two tables in the hand of thy Saviour, and receive the ten commandments from his mouth. Happy for thee, Jesus is thy lawgiver. His Spirit will evangelize thine obedience. He will bring thine heart into it. He will set thee in the chariot of love, and thou shalt ride on prosperously: he will oil the wheels of duty, and they shall run easy and pleasant. Thou shalt be carried sweetly through duty, thy Beloved being present and conversing with thee in it; yea, thy faith working by love to him will render fellowship with God, in all thou doest, the joy of thy heart and the glory of thy life.

O beg of thy divine Teacher thus to spiritualize thine obedience. From him only canst thou learn

the two great commandments, which are the sum and substance of the will of thy God. In the first, his nature is revealed, and then his worship. He is the Lord thy God, Jehovah thy Alehim: Jehovah means the self-existent Godhead; and Alehim, the persons in covenant, Father, Son, and Spirit, partakers of the same self-existence and divine glory, without any difference or inequality. There can be no true religion without the true object of worship, and he cannot be worshipped unless he be known; therefore it is an indispensable duty to know the Lord God. But how shall fallen man attain to this knowledge? He lost it by sin, and he cannot by any reasoning faculty or power of his own recover it. It is a matter of fact, that no man did ever by searching find out God: and attested, by infallible authority, that the world by its wisdom knew not God. There is no true description of the Godhead, but what is revealed in Scripture; and it is altogether from the teaching of the Holy Spirit, that any one savingly understands what is revealed. He, the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, opens the eyes of the mind, sets the object before them, and gives a clear idea of it. He takes of the things of God, and shows them to his disciples. He does not lead them into abstracted reasonings about the divine nature, or what the absolute Godhead is, but his lessons are useful and practical. He teaches the knowledge of the persons in Jehovah, as they are related to sinners in the covenant of grace. Through him the Father is made known: "Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, by whom we cry, Abba, Father." Through *him* the Son is believed in: for "no man can say that

never attain to any steadfastness, but are tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, and at last come to nothing.

Others, pretending to be better settled, attain to some form of godliness, but are without the life and power of it. They appear to have some notions and opinions about the way of righteousness, but not being taught them of God, nor ever brought under the mighty influence of them, their walk is therefore very uneven and irregular, and generally in the end brings great scandal upon the name and cause of Christ.

We have also many at this day, who set out in the ways of religion, but never felt the ruin of the fall, nor the plague of their own hearts: these are commonly very confident and presumptuous; they make a shining profession, and go on with great parade, until they come to be tried, and then in the time of temptation they fall away.

There are others who are the real children of God, and yet do not walk as becometh their high rank and dignity. An even, holy, happy walk with their reconciled God and Father is their privilege, and there is grace sufficient promised in Jesus, and to be received by his Spirit, to enable them to live up to it, that they may walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing. Yea, the apostles call upon them and encourage them to be going on and advancing in the right way—"Furthermore then, we beseech you and exhort you, brethren, by the Lord Jesus Christ, that as ye have received of us, how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more." How few follow this evangelical ex-

is in heaven loves me. And I desire in the sense of this to love him, to cleave to him with full purpose of heart, and gratefully to devote all I have and am to his service and to his glory. O thou divine Revealer of this love, enlighten mine understanding, and influence my affections, that I may grow in the knowledge of my Father in Jesus: for

In him the Father only is to be known. He is his Father, as our covenant head, and therefore ours in him. God is not a Father to any but in Christ. The name Father respects Christ as the first-begotten, and then all his seed. He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, and depends for its adoption on the Father of their Lord Jesus Christ. He undertook to be made man, to live and die for the many sons whom he was to bring to glory: and in consequence of his undertakings, it pleased the Father to lay up all fulness of grace for them in the God-man, their covenant head. And it pleases the Spirit to witness of this fulness, and to enable believers to receive out of it grace for grace. Thus he reveals Emmanuel to them. They know him, and are one with him. He is their Lord and their God, and by faith they live in him and upon him. Trusting to his atonement and righteousness, they have peace with their reconciled Father, and they enjoy his love shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost. Waiting in the appointed ways, they grow in the knowledge of the wonderful person God-Jesus. They see more of the divine glory of his salvation-work, and, by depending on it daily they enjoy more of the things which accompany sal

are fightings, within are fears. If it be very difficult, under such trials, to preserve a sense of God's loving-kindness, yet it should be remembered, there is a gracious provision made for the establishing of the soul so safely in Jesus Christ, that the peace of God may rule in it always, and by all means. Is it not necessary then to inquire, what this provision is—how it may be received—and how it may be made use of? For if by daily practice it may be experienced in its divine power, it will then have the same happy effect which it had upon David: "I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou hast set my heart at liberty." May thine heart, reader, and mine, enjoy more of the liberty of the children of God, and then we shall not only go forward, but also run fast; and may nothing stop us from pressing toward the mark, till we win the prize of the high calling of God in Jesus Christ.

This has been my constant prayer during the writing of the following Treatise. It was the fruit of reading, and meditating, and praying over those scriptures which speak of the walk of faith. Such reflections as used to occur to myself, I have put down; whether it was in searching mine own heart, or in begging the blessing of God upon the text then under consideration. This seemed to me an easy method, and very useful: because the doctrine would lead to practice, and frequent and heart-searching meditations would tend, under the teaching of the Holy Ghost, to an increase of faith. There are some soliloquies addressed to my own soul, and some exercises of devotion in prayer and thanksgiving. I would have every believer to con-

creating. He teaches all the children of God to know their Father, and to experience his love to them in his Son; and then they cannot but love him. He creates the new heart for this very purpose, and makes it sensible that the Father's love is all received through the Son; and therefore, the Father and the Son are beloved with an undivided affection.

The Son is his office-name. It should never be heard without putting us in mind of the wonderful love of our God in his undertakings. He covenanted to be made flesh. What a miracle of love is that! He engaged with his Father to be the surety for his people, to do their work, to suffer their punishment; and then God and man, one Christ for ever, was to have all fulness of covenant blessings to give his people. The Father has no love, the Spirit bestows no grace, but what comes through Christ. A believer is therefore taught, in every thing he does, to have fellowship with Christ. His safety, his happiness, his hopes of happiness to-day and for ever, are blessings to be received out of Emmanuel's fulness: for he is the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all. And while the member is receiving life, and sense, and happiness, from the fulness of the head, he will have fresh motives to love his divine Saviour. What can fix his affections, if gratitude to Jesus cannot? He has every thing in him that can win the heart. He has beauty to engage love, blessings to increase love, glories to increase love to him for evermore. He is beauty without a rival: Whatever is charming in any earthly object, is but a ray from him, and should lead to him: it is but a

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CHAPTER I.

Whoever walks with God, must be first acquainted with the way of peace.

It is the constant usage of Scripture to represent spiritual things by material, and to speak of the faculties and actions of the soul by terms borrowed from those of the body. Walking is a bodily action, and consists in moving and going from one place to another; hence it is applied to the spiritual walk. The soul reconciled to God, and at peace with him, has an appointed way in which it is to walk, in order to enjoy the grace promised to them who are in Christ Jesus. This is enjoyed by faith, and therefore the Scriptures call the believer's going on in his walk with God from strength to strength, *The walk of faith.* "We walk by faith," says the apostle, "not by sight."

When man fell from God, he lost his way, and had neither will nor power to return. The Old Testament church makes this confession—"All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way."

The apostle Peter reminds believers of this—"Ye were as sheep going astray, but are now returned to the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls." To which agree the words of his brother Paul—"There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none that understandeth; there is none that seeketh after God, they are all gone out of the way." The whole human race, say the oracles of truth, is gone astray, all of them are gone out of the way; they have left the way of God, and turned every one to his own way; they are unable, like a poor lost sheep, the most unable of all creatures, to return, yea, they are unwilling also; for they walk not after the Spirit, but after the flesh—carnally-minded, and in their carnal mind enmity itself against God and his ways.

It pleased God, in the exceeding riches of his grace, to reveal to those wanderers the way of salvation. He made it known to them upon the fall: and believers, from that time forward, saw it plainly, and went on in it comfortably. Enoch, Noah, Abraham, &c. are said to have walked with God, in the very same way afterwards marked out by the written word; which was a directory to the Jews, showing them how they should walk in the steps of the faith of their father Abraham. Age after age God raised up the prophets to bring his people into the king's highway, and to put them upon praying, that they might be kept in it. By the mouth of his servant David, he gave them this promise—"Good and upright is the Lord, therefore will he teach sinners in the way: the meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way." Encouraged by this warrant from the word of God, sinners, feeling

God, and give great offence to men. Be humbled, O my soul, for thine own failing. Remember what reason thou hast to mourn for the infirmities of thy love—how barren it is in its proper fruits—how cold, when it should be fervent—how polluted, when it should be pure—how covetous, when it should be liberal! Hast thou duly attended to the cause of this, and does it grieve thee to thy heart? Wouldst thou be saved from self-love, and increase in brotherly love yet more and more? Since this is thy case, meditate carefully upon what is promised, and pray earnestly for what is provided, for the subduing of those tempers which are enemies to brotherly love, and which, if not subdued, will hinder thee from enjoying the love of God in thy walk with him.

1. Consider thy state. Thou art a pardoned sinner, not under the law, but under grace; freely, fully saved from the guilt of all thy sins. There is none to condemn, God having justified thee. He sees thee in his Son, washed thee in his blood, clothed thee in his righteousness, and he embraces him and thee, the head and the members, with the same affection.

2. Consider what is promised to them who are in Christ. Sin shall not have dominion over them. Pardoned sin shall not reign. It cannot, for it is dethroned. Thou art, therefore, free from its bondage. Stand fast in this liberty. Now the condemning power of sin is taken out of thy conscience, make use of the grace provided in Jesus to deliver thine heart from the love of it, and thy conversation from the slavish service of it. And remember this grace is almighty. Trust in it, and thou shalt be saved from the tyranny of every sin. Therefore,

he said to David, "Seek ye my face"—his heart replied, "Thy face, Lord, will I seek." His heart said it. His affections were set upon God, and he was ready to seek, wherever God was to be found. No hunted hart ever panted more after the water-brooks, than his soul did after God. His hope in doing any thing was to have God's gracious presence with him. And his happiness in it was to have communion with God. This is gospel duty. And what a glorious privilege is it! O that it may be my happy experience thus to meet God in all his ways, and to enjoy him in my daily walk! That thou mayest grow in this divine fellowship, consider, O my soul, some of the duties of the first table, and learn to practise them upon gospel principles. The first and chief is prayer, which consists in keeping up daily converse with thy God upon all occasions. This is the breathing of the new-born soul. It wants to draw the air of heaven, and to live in its own proper element. There is a way opened for it unto the throne of glory, and the children of God may approach it with boldness: for it is a throne of grace, and he that sitteth upon it loves to hear and to answer their petitions. He is their Father—"I go," says Jesus, "to my Father, and to your Father: my Father himself loveth you; ask what ye will of him in my name, he will do it." This is the beloved object of prayer—a reconciled Father in Jesus, whose heart is full of tenderness to the complaints and miseries of his family—his promises are the declarations of his pure love—a dependence upon his fulfilling them does honour to his truth and faithfulness, and always brings down the blessing. The

existing, but their manner of acting; not what they are in themselves, but how they stand related to us in the economy of redemption: for the Eternal Three entered into covenant before all worlds, and agreed to sustain certain covenant offices, and assume names, or characters, descriptive of their offices. Father is the title of that divine person, who, out of his infinite grace, gave an innumerable company of sinners to his Son, upon condition that he would be manifested in the flesh, and would become their surety, to work out for them a righteousness in his life, and to make an atonement for them by his death, and then he would be his Father and their Father. A co-equal and co-eternal person accepted the condition, and covenanted to be made man, and to live and die for the many sons whom he was to bring into glory; therefore he took the name of Son, Son of God, Son of Man, &c. Another co-equal and co-eternal person covenanted to breathe life into them, to be to them the Spirit, or breath of life, that they might be regenerate from a death in trespasses and sins, and be made the children of God, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; therefore he is called throughout the Scriptures, the Spirit, or the breath of life. He makes them acquainted with the covenant, as he has promised: "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will show them his covenant." He will open to them the nature and certainty of all covenant engagements for the establishment and growth of their faith. The covenant was ordered in all things and sure; it was ordered by the counsel and purpose of the Eternal Three concerning the heirs of promise, whose salva-

be performed always in this faith. If there be infirmities in it, such as wandering coldness, or the like, we are to remember, that we are not heard for the goodness of our prayers, nor answered for the fervency of them. That which makes our persons accepted, obtains acceptance for our services also. We and all we do are only accepted in the Beloved: "For through Jesus Christ, we have an access by one Spirit unto the Father;" our access is through Jesus Christ. Trusting to his finished salvation, we enter into the presence of the Father; and guided by the Holy Spirit, we pray in faith. Whatever we ask in the Son's name, we know that we have the petitions which we desired of him. This spiritualizes prayer, and puts glory upon it: because there is heavenly fellowship with God in it, with the Father through the Son, by the one Spirit.

These are some of the privileges of Christian prayer. Thou goest, O my soul, to meet thy God in it—to converse with thy Father—to call on him for the fulfilling of his promises made in Jesus—to wait on him for his answers—and to give him his glory. O what blessed seasons hast thou enjoyed in this communion with thy God! How has he manifested his nearness to thee, and bounty towards thee! Hast thou not found his heart open, his ears open, and his hands open, to grant thee the request of thy lips? And when thou hast not found such sweet fellowship with thy God in prayer, yet thy dependence on his faithful word has been exercised and improved. Thou hast left thy petitions with thy Friend and Advocate, trusting to that most glorious description of him in Rev. viii. 3, 4. "And

They are bestowed to the praise of the glory of free grace. They are not conferred upon the worthy, but upon enemies, upon the ungodly, upon sinners as sinners. No conditions are required, no pre-requisites are expected. The motives which determine God to show mercy to sinners, are not taken from any good in them, or foreseen to be in them. Not for works of righteousness which they have done, or can do; but according to his mercy he saveth them. He does all to the magnifying of the honours of his own mercy. His covenant was so contrived—carried into execution by the life and death of Jesus applied by the Holy Spirit, that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. No flesh shall glory in his presence. Boasting is for ever excluded; because all is of grace. Wisdom to teach the sinner saving knowledge, righteousness to justify him, strength to keep him, comforts to bless him, heaven to receive him—these are the free gifts of covenant love: for by grace he is saved through faith, and that not of himself, it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast. Thus would the Lord hide pride from man, and would teach him practically such scriptures as this—"Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord, be it known unto you, but for mine holy name's sake."

Closely connected with this divine lesson is the fulness of covenant mercies. Every thing needful for the salvation of the sinner is fully, as well as freely provided by the exceeding riches of grace, and is treasured up by the Father's love in the fulness of the Son. To this the Spirit bears witness in the word of truth, and seals his witness upon the believer's

heart. It pleased the Father that in the Word made flesh should all fulness dwell, and that out of his fulness his people should receive grace for grace. This is the infinite ocean. There is not a stream, not a drop of grace to be had but from hence: Jesus Christ, as God-man, has it all in himself, and for the same end as the head has the senses in itself. He has it to communicate to his members, a fulness of light and life, of sense and understanding, of love and joy, yea, of every spiritual blessing. On him, as the head of the body, the church, every believing member is directed to live. On him must he depend at all times; and to him must he go for all things. If he seek pardon and peace, righteousness and holiness, a supply of his wants, strength for his warfare, comforts under his miseries—if he expect life in death, and life eternal, he must make continual use of the fulness of Jesus; for in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. It dwelleth in him as in an overflowing fountain. The Father's love to his adopted children, the experience of it by the grace of the Spirit, are entirely in and from the salvation of Jesus Christ. Out of his fulness comes every covenant mercy of the Godhead, and in a rich abundant stream, always flowing with some blessing or other into the believer's soul. The enjoyment of it on his part, may not be always alike comfortable, but is always alike sure on God's part. Nothing can stop it. Nothing can turn its course. Unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again. The river of the water of life proceeds out of the throne of God and the Lamb, and it will be running on till it come back into its own ocean.

"The water that I will give him," says Jesus, speaking of the believer, "shall be in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life, and bringing with it the fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore."

No man will see any reason to set out in the way to heaven, until he be made acquainted with those truths. His judgment must be enlightened with the knowledge of them. He will never think of changing his course, until he be made sensible of his own sinful and helpless state; and when this is brought home to his conscience, and he has nothing in himself left to trust in, then he will be led to look abroad for help. The Spirit of God will teach him the doctrines of grace, the nature of the Godhead, the persons in the Godhead, the covenant of the divine Persons, by which every grace and blessing was freely and fully provided, given by the Father to the Son, in whose fulness they were all laid up for the use of his body the church, and communicated to every member of it, through the influence of the Holy Spirit. Thus he is taught, that all is of grace from first to last. Whatever good a sinner receives on earth, or enjoys in heaven, is so given, as to exclude all boasting, and to lay every proud and self-righteous principle in the dust, that grace alone may wear the crown, and may have all the glory.

Here, then, O my soul, is matter of close examination! Dost thou know thyself, thy state and condition, and hast thou fled from the wrath to come? Has the light of God's word shone into thy understanding, and made thee to see that thou art indeed set out in the way to heaven? How was this discovered to thee? Did the Holy Spirit ever convince

thee of sin, and that thou hadst lost the image and forfeited the favour of God? Didst thou ever see thyself fallen in Adam, in him a child of wrath, a ruined miserable sinner? Hast thou felt how utterly unable thou art to atone for thy sins, or to make thyself holy? And wast thou brought to submit to Christ's righteousness after many legal trials and self-righteous efforts?—at last forced to give up all hope in thyself, and to look to the Lord who made heaven and earth, from whom alone thy help could come?

And hast thou been taught the true knowledge of the unity of the Godhead, and of the Persons in it, Father, Son, and Spirit, the covenant of the ever-blessed Three, and the absolute security of all covenant mercies promised by the Father, and engaged to be given to the Son, as the head of his body the church, who is now actually as God-man in possession of them, and by his Spirit he freely and fully bestows them upon his members? for they will never cease to be receiving out of his fulness grace for grace, until they receive out of the same fulness glory for glory.

O my soul, examine closely, and prove thyself by the standard of the divine word. Search and try, what the conviction of thy lost estate has been. Was it deep and practical? Is it an abiding truth with thee, that there is no help or hope in thyself? And hast thou fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before thee in the Lord Jesus? Is thy knowledge of the Godhead mere theory, or is it brought into practice? Dost thou enjoy the Father's love, through faith in the finished salvation of the Son, by the influence of the Holy Spirit? This is the saving know-

ledge of the Godhead. And is this thine? Dost thou honour the divine Persons, by acknowledging their immutable counsel, and immutable oath, entered into for the security of the heirs of promise, that they might trust, and not be afraid? Dost thou see with any clearness the absolute safety of relying upon the promises of God, and dost thou expect to draw from hence comfort to thy conscience, and joy to thy heart?

If thou art indeed set out in the way to heaven, art thou settled in the knowledge of thy fallen state? Hast thou found thyself unable to do any thing, but to hasten on thy ruin? And from the sight and sense of this, hast thou been led to see all undertaken for thee, and secured to thee for time and eternity, in the covenant of the ever-blessed Trinity? These truths lie at the very foundation of all comfortable walking with God. See that thou be well grounded in them. The knowledge of thyself is to bring thee to God: the knowledge of God is to lead thee to walk with him. The one is to teach thee to renounce all trust in thyself: the other is to show thee that thou mayest safely place the confidence of thy heart on thy reconciled Father, thy Saviour, and thy Guide. Look up to him then, O my soul, and be often praying to him, and saying—

O Lord God! that which I see not, teach thou me. Keep me an humble disciple in the school of Christ. Let me be daily learning there, what I am in myself, a fallen sinful creature, justly deserving everlasting destruction from thy presence. O let me never lose sight of my want of a Saviour, nor ever be without the sense of what he said—" With-

out me ye can do nothing." Teach me this, thou eternal Spirit. Open thou mine understanding to understand the Scriptures. What thou hast revealed in them concerning the Godhead, and concerning the counsels and works of the ever-blessed Trinity, that reveal to my soul. Thou hast declared, that no man can say Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost: O shine then into my dark mind, and lead me into the saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus. Make me acquainted with his covenant undertakings, and his perfect fulfilling of them, that, by resting on his finished salvation, I may find the Father's love in the Son, his Father my Father, and may be brought, through thy blessed influence, to have fellowship with the Father and the Son. O lead me into all truth, thou Spirit of wisdom and revelation, that I may know the things which belong to my peace, and may, through thee, be made wise unto salvation! Amen.

CHAPTER II.

The believer is reconciled to God, and has the peace of God ruling in his conscience; and they two walk together, because they are now agreed.

It is written in the prophets—"They shall be all taught of God"—every one of his children shall be brought to the knowledge of the truth, and what they have been taught in the understanding shall be made practical, that it may have its proper effect upon the conscience. And this is answered, when it comes

under the authority and power of the word of God, and faithfully accuses or condemns according to that unerring rule.

Conscience supposes the knowledge of some rule, and it consists in comparing a man's state or actions with that rule, in order to discover whether they agree with it or not.

The rule is the Scripture, the whole revealed will of God, which is the unerring, and the only standard of right and wrong: for all Scripture is given by the inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, to teach the man of God what is truth, and to make him wise in it unto salvation. Fallen man has no means of discovering the will of God, but as it is revealed to him. He has no innate knowledge. He has no implanted principles. He is born as ignorant of God, and of the things of God, as a wild ass's colt. His understanding is darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in him, because of the blindness of his heart. And he has no means in his own power of attaining any divine knowledge; for he cannot, by searching, find out God. The world by its wisdom never did find him out. The Hottentots know as much of him as the Greeks and Romans did: indeed the natural man, let him be ever so wise, knoweth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them; because they are spiritually discerned.

The Scripture, then, is the only rule of right and wrong. Conscience has no direction but this rule. Neither ethics nor metaphysics, no fancied light of dark nature, no lawless law of rebel nature, no hu-

man science, whether pretended to be implanted, or by the use of reason to be acquired, have any right to guide the conscience. These are blind leaders of the blind; they undertake what they are not only unfit, but what they have no warrant for. A parcel of felons in jail may think what they will of their state. They may take it upon them to form a mock court, and to try one another. They may acquit or condemn as they please; but the judge and the jury will pay no regard to their foolish proceedings. There is a word which is to try us at the last day, and by that we should try ourselves at present. It was revealed for this purpose. And when the revealed truth is clearly understood, then conscience is acting aright, if it finds a true verdict for God, either accusing, or else excusing, according to the direction of his unerring word.

And this is the work of the Holy Spirit. He enlightened the judgment with the knowledge of the truth, in order to make it practical; which he effects by bringing the conscience to submit to the sovereignty of God in the law, and to submit to the righteousness of God in the gospel. Herein he displays the omnipotent power of his grace, according to the promise. He carries with demonstration the conviction of guilt, and the conviction of righteousness, to the conscience. By the former, he gives the sinner a real heart-felt sense of his sin and misery, and he acknowledges himself a convict of the law, justly deserving all its penalties in time and eternity. By the latter, he sets open a door of hope, showing him the perfect righteousness of the God-man, wrought out for such guilty creatures as he is: he enables him

to plead it before the throne, and to trust in it for his acceptance; by which means, he finds relief in his conscience, and comfort in his heart. Being justified by faith, he has peace with God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

What the Holy Spirit teaches, has life as well as light in it. He accompanies his doctrine with the power of God. What he has revealed concerning the state of mankind under the fall, he applies with divine evidence to the conscience. Under his influence, the sinner reads those scriptures, and feels the truth of them: "As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: through the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation: for it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Now we know, that what things soever the law saith, it commands them who are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." His mouth is stopped. He has no plea to make. No excuse left. What the law saith he subscribes to. The law brings him in guilty before God, and in his conscience he bears his testimony to the law. He acknowledges it to be holy, just, and good, even in its penalties, which he deserves to suffer. Formerly he tried in his own strength, and took great pains to escape them, but now he gives over all those self-righteous attempts. He found that he laboured in vain to atone for his sins, or to

make himself holy. He groans, being burdened, under the ruins of the fall. His ignorance, rebellion, apostacy, his corruption in every faculty of soul and body, render him unable to take one step in his return to God. He owns it, and confesses, that without Christ he can do nothing.

O my soul, consider whether God has taught thee this knowledge of thyself. It is absolutely necessary to reconcile thee to him and to his ways. Thou wilt never heartily agree to walk with him by faith, so long as thou hast any thing of thine own to trust in, or to draw comfort from. Examine then; art thou sensible of thy fall, and dost thou feel the sad effects of it? Dost thou know what it is to be alienated from the life of God? What! dost thou find to this day the opposition of thy sinful nature to the holy law, the flesh lusting in thee against the Spirit? Has God thus convinced thee of sin? If he has, then in thy conscience thou submittest to what the law says of thy state. Thy mouth is stopped, and thou art guilty before God. Thou hast nothing of thine own to urge in arrest of judgment. This is an enlightened conscience; so far as it speaks for God, and is guided by his unerring word. O pray to the Lord the Spirit, and beg of him to guide thee into all truth, that he may bring thy conscience to submit to the righteousness of Jesus, and to be a faithful witness for him.

This is his proper work in the soul, and what he undertook in the everlasting covenant. 'When he is come,' says Christ, 'he shall convince the world of righteousness; he shall testify of me, that I am *made of* God righteousness to believers; and he shall

glorify me, as Jehovah their righteousness: thus he shall teach them my righteousness, with which the Father is satisfied; and he shall, through faith, apply it effectually to their consciences, and they shall also be satisfied with it.' Being justified by faith, they shall have peace with God, through their Lord Jesus Christ.

Righteousness is a perfect conformity to the law: if it be tried by the balance of the sanctuary, it is full weight; if by the standard, it is full measure; if judgment be laid to the line and righteousness to the plummet, it is quite upright. There is no defect in it of any kind. This is the righteousness of the law—it must be perfect and continual, failing in no one point: for the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God. And it is an adjudged case, that there is none righteous, no, not one. It is left upon record, that all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God: therefore, by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight.

When the Holy Spirit has convinced a sinner of his being in this unrighteous state, then it becomes an important inquiry—how can the Judge of all the earth ever look upon and treat a sinner, as if he was a righteous person? To which the gospel answers directly—"God hath made Christ to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." This was agreed upon in the covenant of the Eternal Three. The Father undertook to maintain the honour and dignity of his law and justice. His co-equal Son undertook for his people to come in their nature, and to stand in their place and stead; to act for them, and to suffer

for them. As their surety, he made himself answerable for their debt of obedience, and for their debt of suffering. Accordingly, when the great Law-fulfiller cometh into the world, he saith, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God!" He did it in his infinitely holy life, in which he magnified the precepts of the law, and made them everlastingly honourable. He suffered it in his infinitely holy passion, bearing the sins and sorrows of his people, their curse and wrath, in his body and soul upon the tree, until the immense debt being paid, he cried out, in the triumph of a conquering though a dying Jesus, "It is finished;"—for through death he conquered death, and him that had the power of death; that is, the devil: he finished the transgression, and made an end of sins, and made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness.

This is the great leading truth of the gospel, in which the peace of conscience is principally concerned. The justly-offended God is here revealed under the character of a reconciled Father. He gave his Son to be a covenant of the people, who was to fulfil all covenant engagements for them; and he has fulfilled them all. The end of his living and dying for them is answered. He has finished the transgression, and has made peace by the blood of the cross. He has brought in everlasting righteousness by his divine obedience, and the Lord is well pleased with him for his righteousness' sake; yea, he is well pleased also with his body, the church. He looks upon all the members, as he looks upon the Head. He accepts them in the Beloved. He beholds them in him with *perfect* delight, and rests in his love. He is his

Father, and their Father. He is related to his whole family in heaven and earth in the closest bonds of fatherly affection, and he makes his love known to them, and sheds it abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost. He would have all his children to address him under his dear name—"Our Father, which art in heaven;" and to expect from his fatherly love all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus.

When this comfortable doctrine is received into the conscience, it silences guilt, and produces peace with God. The gospel comes with full authority to establish it in the conscience: for it is therein revealed and proposed to our belief, under the character of a divine record, made authentic and properly enrolled in the court of heaven. The witnesses are the Eternal Three. Their record is in the nature of a covenant, confirmed by their joint counsel, and ratified by their joint oath—the two immutable things in which it is impossible for God to lie. He graciously vouchsafed to give the heirs of promise this perfect security for their salvation, that, after they had fled to Jesus for refuge, there might be an end of all strife in their consciences, and they might have strong consolation. Accordingly we read—"There are Three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these Three are one." A record among men, is an authentic testimony in writing, entered by authority in one of the king's courts, in order to preserve the proceedings had upon any suit. This record contains the final determination of the judges in that cause, and is their memorial of it, and therefore imports in itself such uncontrollable evidence, as to admit of no proof

to the contrary. The matter of the record is never allowed to be tried by a jury, but is of such credit as not to be questioned in any instance. This is the nature of a record in law. And if we receive the witness of men, certainly the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God, which he hath witnessed of his Son, namely, "He hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." To which the Spirit beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. He has revealed the covenant of life and peace, which was between the Father and the Son: he has entered it upon record, and every word of the record may be pleaded; for it is allowed to be good and valid in the court of heaven. As a powerful advocate, he pleads the perfect fulfilling of all righteousness in the life and death of the God-man; and the Father's perfect acceptance of what he did and suffered, as the full redemption-price for all his people, and he carries his cause in the court of conscience. The awakened sinner is convinced that the work of Jesus is a finished salvation, and that the divine record is a sufficient warrant for him to believe in it. Accordingly he gives it credit, and is enabled to plead it against guilt and fear. Upon which he finds peace with God. Trusting to the blood of sprinkling for pardon, and to the righteousness of Jesus for acceptance; he then sees God reconciled to him, and that reconciles him to God, and by the Spirit of adoption he cries, "Abba, Father."

But perhaps it may be said, 'I believe this, but I do not find peace in my conscience.' Nay, but you do not believe it: if you did, it would certainly bring present relief; for guilt comes from the broken

law, and from the apprehension of punishment deserved: but the law has been restored to its dignity, and made infinitely honourable by the righteousness of Jesus—how can you believe this, and yet be under guilt? The punishment was laid upon Jesus, and he suffered all that was due to his people, as their atoning sacrifice—how can you believe this, and yet fear that justice will punish you? A debtor would not fear to be arrested, if his surety had paid the sum, and got him a full discharge. A felon, with the king's pardon in his pocket, would dishonour it greatly, if he was to live in continual dread and terror of suffering for his crime. Examine carefully, and pray for the right understanding of your case: and depend upon it, you will find that either you do not believe the matter of fact, or the record concerning it.

The matter of fact is the method provided for quieting the guilty conscience—a provision of exceeding rich grace, and of everlasting efficacy. The Father gave the Son to be the surety for his people, and to live and to die for them, and in their stead. The Son has finished the work which the Father gave him to do, and is become the author of their eternal salvation.

The record of this fact is in the Scripture. Father, Son, and Spirit, the three witnesses in heaven, have by covenant and oath attested, that there is life for every one who believeth in Jesus. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Now, consider, of what do you doubt? Has

sinful nature, and groaning under the burden of indwelling sin, as holy Paul did, and as all the dear children of God do, when they are in their right mind. This is godly sorrow, which worketh repentance not to be repented of. It is the true poverty of spirit, to which the Lord has promised his blessing. Indeed, every one that has it is blessed, because it is not only consistent with the truest joy, but also is the very proper temper of mind in which it is preserved and increased. They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. Self-knowledge is the breaking up of the fallow ground, and is the ploughing and harrowing of it, thereby making it fit for the good seed, and to receive the enlivening influence of the heavens. The more any man knows of himself, the greater reason will he have to seek the harvest of his joys in God; and seeking by faith, he will find them. If he be in the deepest humiliation, he will be then best disposed to rejoice in God. This holy joy generally rises highest when self is lowest: as the highest tide is always after the lowest ebb. Remember this, O my soul, in the most abasing views of thy fallen nature, and it will lead thee to seek, and in believing to find, *that* in God which thou hast not in thyself. The empty, and none but the empty, may be filled with his joy. Let every discovery of thine emptiness lead thee to trust more in the salvation of God, and to enjoy more of its blessings; and then thou mayest be, with Paul, always sorrowful, yet always rejoicing. Sorrow for self is the greatest friend to joy in God. Self-loathing is accompanied with the sweetest delight in God. May the apostle's experience herein be thine: "We are of the circum-

or money's worth. He thinks himself honoured by the pensioners of his grace, who bring nothing to recommend themselves but their sins and miseries, and yet trust in his promised relief. Herein he glories. When they come to him believing, he bestows his royal gifts upon every one of them; and so far as they believe, he withholds nothing that is needful for their holy walk in the way of duty.

These are the principles which thou art to bring into practice. Carry them, O my soul, into every act of obedience. Go to prayer and every duty with this faith, that thou art in Christ, and in him a partaker of his finished salvation: then the Father's love to thee will be manifest, and thou wilt have sweet fellowship with him in all thine approaches to the throne:—whatever thou undertakest, forget not this leading truth. If thou lose sight of it, thou wilt get into darkness; if thou art not influenced by it, thou wilt be brought into bondage. Upon this absolutely perfect salvation thou art to live by faith upon earth, and thou wilt have nothing else to live upon by sense in heaven. Trusting to the complete work of Jesus, thou art to walk with thy God in time, as thou wilt follow the Lamb in eternity, receiving all out of his fulness. O view him in this light, and it will have the happiest effects upon thy daily walk. While thou art receiving from him grace for grace, thou wilt live with him in sweet friendship; duty will be the way and means of enjoying the love of thy divine Friend, and the more thou art in his company, the more delightful will be the way of his commandments. These are thy privileges. Read the promises concerning them. Call to mind what thy Father in

Jesus has engaged to give his children. Has he not provided grace sufficient for them? And is it not for his honour, as well as thy profit, that he should give both the will and the power to walk humbly with him? O plead his promises! Bind him with his faithfulness. Be importunate with him, and pray without ceasing. Let this be thy daily plea:—

O my God, order my walk according to thy holy word. It is thy mind and will, that I should love thee with all my heart and soul, and mind and strength, and my neighbour as myself; but I am not sufficient for these things. There is no pure love in my soul by nature. Every affection in me is turned from the Creator to the creature. I am in bondage, a slave to lust, sold under sin. I cannot love thee, infinitely lovely as thou art, until thou break my bonds asunder, and set my soul at liberty. But, being now redeemed from guilt and fear, I am become thy free-man; and, for the unspeakable redemption that is in Jesus, thou wouldst have me to serve thee. Blessed be thy holy name, for requiring mine obedience upon this sweet motive—"I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, and out of the house of bondage." On this account obey me; because I am the Lord your God, and I stand related to you as your Redeemer from slavery. O my gracious God and Father, I desire upon this motive to keep thy commandments. I believe thou art my God in Jesus, and through him I have redemption from bondage to my sins and enemies. With this free spirit would I always go to duty: but I cannot walk in this liberty, any more than I could at first attain it, without thy grace. O my God,

walking with God becomes pleasant, and all his paths are peace.

Search, then, and examine thyself, O my soul! and that not lightly, and after the manner of dissemblers with God, but closely and thoroughly by the light of the divine word, and under the teaching of the divine Spirit. Dost thou understand what is revealed concerning the way of peace—what was covenanted in the counsel of the Eternal Three—and what has been done in consequence of it? Jesus Christ is the great Peace-maker. He has made peace through the blood of his cross. The Father sent him, gave him to be a covenant of the people, to fulfil for them all righteousness, and to be their atoning sacrifice. The Father hath seen the work which he gave him to do, and has accepted it; is perfectly satisfied with it, and therefore is infinitely delighted with him, and with all his. He would now be known by the high style and title of the God of Peace. Fury is not in him to those whom he sees in the Beloved. He is a Father fully, for ever reconciled to all his children in Christ Jesus. He loves them, as he loves him, with every kind feeling of the most tender parent. And he will bring every one of them to partake, with their glorified Head, of the blessings of his everlasting love.

If thine understanding be enlightened with this knowledge of God, is it effectual in thy conscience? Canst thou plead it there? This is the principal thing. Hast thou a good conscience, freed from guilt and condemnation, by believing the record which God hath given of his Son? He is well pleased with him for his righteousness' sake. His soul de-

lighteth in the sweet-smelling savour of his Son's sacrifice. Because he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, therefore the Father hath highly exalted him. This is the witness of God. Dost thou yield to it, and give it full credit? What! canst thou set to thy seal that God is true, and that what satisfied him has perfectly satisfied thee, and therefore the peace of God rules in thy conscience always, and by all means?

Remember, this is thy privilege. Thou art called to the enjoyment of it. The evidence is as full as could be desired, for the ending of all strife in thy conscience. The greatest honour thou canst put upon the divine witnesses, is so to end it, as to suffer no appeal to be made from their decree. Thy conscience should join issue. It should say the same that God does. It should plead thy discharge from guilt, under the broad seal of heaven; and should stop the mouth of unbelief with those words, written in golden letters in the royal charter of grace—"There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus—they are freely forgiven all trespasses. They are justified from all things. Thy sins and iniquities," says God himself, "will I remember no more." These are the immutable words of truth. They cannot be broken. O my soul, put honour upon them! Believe them without doubt or wavering. Why dost thou draw back thy confidence? Trust, and do not be afraid. Thou mayest safely venture to believe all that the Lord hath spoken. He will make it good; and the more thou believest, the more will be made good. More faith will bring thee in a richer revenue of peace. The Lord increase thy

faith. May it entirely influence thy conscience, that it may agree with God: neither questioning the infinite value of the righteousness and atonement of Emmanuel, nor yet the faithfulness of his promise, under which thou claimest them—"Whosoever will may take them freely."

Let thy faith be ever so well established, yet thou wilt meet with something every day to try it; but remember, the foundation on which thou standest cannot fail, and none, nothing shall remove thee from it. The Lord brought thee to build upon this foundation. He hath begun the good work, and he will not leave his work unfinished. The top-stone shall certainly be brought forth with shouting Grace, grace: for his love is like himself. His purposes, his word, his works change not. What if thou feel many things wrong in thyself; thou art sometimes low in spirits; thou canst not be pleased with thy corruption, and thou art not pleased with thy duties; thy graces are weak, thy love not as it should be, thy best services unprofitable; yet these very things rightly understood, and improved by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, will be the means of establishing thy conscience in the peace of God. They will lead thee every day to a greater dependence upon sovereign grace: for they will leave thee nothing to trust in, but the righteousness and the atonement of Emmanuel; nothing to keep thee, but his faithfulness to his word and work; and nothing to bless thee, but his free covenant mercy. Thus they will work together for thy good. Trials will settle thee. Enemies will confirm thee in peace. Troubles will bring thee nearer to God. Amidst all discourage-

ments thou wilt have this promise to stay thy soul upon—" I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." His friendship is fixed. It springs from the purpose and love of his own breast, and therefore was and is always unchangeably the same in him. Whom he loveth, he loveth unto the end.

Well, then, O my soul, thou hast examined thyself. How is it with thee? Dost thou know the way of peace? Art thou at peace with God, being justified by faith? Canst thou plead this peace, and maintain it in thy conscience? Is it a good conscience, does it witness for God? Is it a pure conscience, cleansed from guilt and condemnation? Is it satisfied, that the Father is perfectly reconciled through the life and death of his Son? And is it satisfied with the divine record, giving thee a free grant of the benefits of his life and death, and putting thee into possession by believing? Art thou of one heart and of one mind in this matter with the Father, and now, being at peace with him, agreed to walk in his way? If indeed he has been thus gracious unto thee, bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me praise him for the exceeding riches of his love! What a mercy is it that he has brought thee into the way of peace! O go on: fear not. Set out daily with a holy, humble boldness to walk with thy God. And for the guiding of thy feet in his way, and that thy steps may not decline from it, be diligent in hearing and reading the word of God. Study it. Pray over it. Mind what encouragement it gives thee—" Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by that new and living way which he hath

consecrated for us through the vail, that is to say, his flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." What perfect peace is here proclaimed to the children of God! Sin had separated them from him, but there is access through Jesus. He is the way to the Father. He is a new way, in opposition to the old way of works, which, upon the fall, was shut for ever. He is a living way; all that are alive to God live by the faith of the Son of God. He is a consecrated way; every thing needful for their holy walk being provided in him. And they are required to walk in this way with boldness; trusting to the blood of Jesus, and depending on the intercession of the High Priest over the house of God, they have access with confidence into the holiest. It is their undoubted privilege to draw near with a true heart, not like a double-minded man, wavering and unstable; but with full assurance of faith, entirely satisfied that God in Christ has nothing in his breast but love towards them: therefore they should believe in him, and serve him without fear, having their hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, maintaining peace with God through the continual application of the blood of Jesus, and having their bodies washed with pure water, body and soul being cleansed from the guilt and filth of sin, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost.

O may this be my happy experience! May I ever have grace to draw near to my reconciled Father with a good conscience. Yea, Lord, this is my

heart's desire. I would walk with thee day by day, in perfect peace. O deny me not the request of my lips. Glory be to thy free love, that through Jesus I am suffered to have access into thy presence, and am commanded to come with boldness into the holiest of all. Lo, I come before thee, Holy Father, to plead the blood-shedding and the righteousness of thy dear Son; and I hope my plea will be admitted, through the intercession of the High Priest of the house of God. O look, thou God of peace, upon the face of thy Beloved. See me in him. I desire to be found in him. And for his sake let the faithful witness for thy love in Jesus abide with me, that, in hearing and reading thy word, in prayer and meditation, he may increase my faith in thee and love to thee.

O God the Holy Ghost, I beseech thee to make practical upon my heart what thou hast revealed in Scripture of the Father's love. Deliver me from guilt and condemnation by the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus. Apply it effectually. Apply it continually. Help me to believe with more comfort in my conscience, and with more steadfastness in my walk, that his blood cleanseth from all sin. O blessed Spirit, carry on thy work in my soul. Lead me from faith to faith, that I may at all times have freedom to enter within the vail to a reconciled God and Father, and may be able to maintain peace with him, against doubts and fears, against corruptions and enemies. O teach me to draw near to him with a true heart, steadfastly persuaded of his love, and in full assurance of faith. This is thy gracious office: O fulfil it in me, that my heart may be sprinkled

from an evil conscience, and my body washed with pure water. Let me find grace sufficient for me, for Jesus' sake; to whom with thee, O Father, and the eternal Spirit, three persons in one Jehovah, be equal honour and glory, for ever and ever! Amen.

CHAPTER III.

The Believer in his heart cleaves to God, and walks with him in love.

This depends entirely upon a good conscience. There can be no love of God, unless there be first peace with God. No convinced sinner can love him, until he believes him to be reconciled. While guilt remains in the conscience, enmity will keep its place in the heart: for so long as he looks upon his sins unpardoned, and God the just avenger of them, he must consider him as a jealous God, and a consuming fire. In this view, there is every thing that can increase his guilty fears. And while these defile the conscience, instead of walking with God, he would run away from him, and, like the first offenders, he would foolishly try to hide himself from the presence of God.

But when the Holy Spirit has discovered the way of peace, and has enabled the sinner to find peace, being pardoned and justified through faith in Christ Jesus, then he looks upon God in another light. He can view him, according as he has proclaimed himself, the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious,

long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin. Under this endearing character, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is revealed in Scripture. Thus would he be considered in the covenant of grace—related in the nearest bond of affection to all his children. He is their Father, the Father of mercies, freely loving, freely forgiving, freely accepting them in the Beloved. The Holy Spirit convinces them of it, and sheds the Father's love to them abroad in their hearts; the sense of which sweetly inclines them to love him again. Love begets love. God has put on the tender bowels of an ever-loving parent, and he gives them the affection of dutiful children. They love him, because he first loved them. Then it is the delight of their souls to cultivate and improve this love on their part, and it becomes their heaven upon earth to walk with their God in the ways wherein he has appointed to meet them, to love them, and to bless them.

The main point, then, in the Christian walk, is to know how to maintain peace in the conscience; because this is a powerful motive, upon which the believer first sets out, and it is the great spring which keeps him going on. While his conscience continues pure and undefiled, and the peace of God rules in it, all is well. He does not stop, he does not halt in the way. But when guilt enters, unbelief certainly follows close after it, and then there is a fresh controversy in the court of conscience. Many doubts arise, and afford matter for strife and debate. The sense of peace is not only disturbed, but is also

for a time destroyed by such suspicions as these—'Am I freely pardoned? Is God fully reconciled to me? Is he still my loving Father? I fear not. I have done so and so. He is certainly displeased with me, and therefore I dare not approach him, as I used to do, with love and confidence.' This is an evil conscience. It is not purged from dead works; because guilt is still in it, and this keeps the soul at a distance from God. It begets a coldness and a shyness to him, and, by shutting out the comfortable sense of his love, makes way for fear of wrath. Then the motives to walk with God lose their influence, and an evil heart of unbelief tempts the man to depart from the living God.

Look well, then, O my soul, to this leading truth, which has such universal influence over the Christian walk. Attend to the peace of thy conscience. See it be true peace, and mind it be well settled. Learn to maintain it upon gospel motives. The heart follows the determination of conscience; and cleaves to the Lord, or departs from him, according as the conscience excuses or accuses. It is therefore absolutely necessary for our peace, that we should know how God has shown himself reconciled in Christ Jesus. This character of him in the Scriptures should be studied. Whoever has been enabled to call him Abba, Father, should implore the assistance of the Holy Spirit for an increase of faith, and should make use of all appointed means for his growth in the knowledge of the love of the heavenly Father. The apostle is upon this subject in Romans fifth—a chapter abounding with powerful arguments to establish the peace of God in the con-

every thing that promises them happiness, if they cannot enjoy God in it. Thus he keeps their hearts chaste and fixed upon God. Their joy becomes simple as their faith is: for this looks at the finished salvation, and, resting entirely upon it, sees God perfectly reconciled: thereby it lays a sure foundation for their joy in God; because they now know him by faith to be their God, and can see their interest in all the blessings of his love in Jesus. This is the fountain-head of joy, from whence flow rivers of pleasure for evermore. The nearer they live to the fountain-head, the more communion they have with God: their hearts become purer and holier, and their joys are more spiritual and heavenly.

This is the only remedy for the miseries with which the world abounds. Men are uneasy; seek for joy, and cannot find it; because they seek where it is not. They go to broken cisterns, which cannot hold it. They are disappointed, and wonder; but still go on, spending their days in this vain pursuit. They do not attain any true joy. It flies from them, and at last they lie down in sorrow. What thanks then art thou bound, O my soul, to return unto thy God, who hast saved thee from this delusion! What a mercy is it that thou hast been led to the fountain of joy! O live near it, and from it derive all thy streams. Seek them all in God, and seek them in faith, upon the warrant of the divine promise. He has said, "The meek shall increase their joy in the Lord"—they shall have it, and increase it. The more meek and lowly thou art, the more wilt thou be joyful in God. Pray then for growing humility, that thou mayest experi-

and he is not sensible of what he deserves to suffer; therefore he goes on merrily, laughing and singing under a load of guilt, enough to ruin a thousand worlds. But when the Spirit of life enters into him, and he is made to see his state, to feel his guilt, and to fear his danger, then he begins to groan under the cross. Every day he discovers how totally he was fallen, and departed in heart from the living God. He now tastes the bitterness of sin, and finds the deadly fruits of it. Although there be a remedy provided to bring the wanderers home, and he is made acquainted with it, yet he is without strength to apply to it. He cannot by believing take the comfort of it. When it is given him to believe, he still has sin and suffering to exercise his faith. Against his corruptions and temptations he must be continually fighting the good fight of faith. From this warfare he can have no discharge but by death. He must take to himself the whole armour of God, and be under arms night and day, or he will never be able to resist the assaults of evil spirits, or to overcome the opposition of evil men. This is the heritage of all the servants of the Lord. All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. If they be on the Lord's side, all his enemies will certainly be theirs; so that if they enter into his kingdom, it must be through much tribulation. The King himself went this way to the crown, bearing his cross; and he has assured us there is no other way—"Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple"—he must deny himself what by nature he loves, and must love what by nature he hates: unless he live in this

state of self-denial, which is to be his daily cross, he cannot live in communion with me, as one of my disciples. If he be one of the highest of them, yet he must carry his cross: for he has still a fallen nature, and its senses and appetites are always lusting against the will of God; and it is like plucking out a right eye, to deny them their gratifications, and to refuse them their much-coveted pleasures. He is in a body of sin and death, and must carry his cross to his grave, being liable to all the sufferings which mortality is heir to, and all the way mortified under them, because he cannot bear them without faith, nor hold out without patience—and these graces are not of himself, but are the gift of God. He is also forced to carry another cross all his days, even the corruption of his nature, depraved in every faculty, and always inclined to evil. This is the burden and grief of the children of God, under which they all groan: and a sore and heavy burden it is, heavier for being continual, and for its always working against the grace and glory of the Lord Christ: for this infection of nature doth remain, yea, in them that are regenerated, and appears in nothing more, than in their adulterous love to their own righteousness, of which they are so dotingly fond, that after the Holy Spirit has divorced them from it, and their Maker has become their husband, even the Lord their RIGHTEOUSNESS, yet still an unlawful attachment to their own righteousness remains, and is the cause of the greatest crosses, and of the heaviest trials they meet with in their way to heaven.

Hence the cross becomes necessary for the whole nature of fallen man, for body and soul. The sen-

sual appetites are continually seeking their gratification in unlawful things, and the spiritual faculties are full of blind pride, and self-righteousness, and know no way to the divine favour, but by their own works and goodness. The cross is indispensably needful to mortify the flesh, with its affections and lusts, and to crucify the vanity of the mind, that when it would glory, it may have nothing left to glory in but the Lord. In this light let us consider the infinite love, which appointed the outward cross for the outward man, and the inward cross for the inward man; and let us see how, by each of them, communion with God is preserved, and the believer is helped forward in his blessed journey.

CHAPTER IX.

The believer, exercised with the outward Cross, carries it with patience, and finds it a great help to him in his walk heavenwards.

We call that a cross which opposes our will. This opposition renders it painful and grievous. A very little matter, the least trifle, becomes a great cross, when our will is set much against it. How then can the believer rejoice with a heavy cross upon his back? or how can he rejoice all his days, if he must carry it to his grave? The blessed gospel discovers how this may be, and the blessed Spirit gives the experience of it: for he continues to teach the doctrines of grace, and under the cross he ex-

science, in order that the love of God may rule in the heart. He gives us this account of the privileges of a justified man:—He has peace with God through Jesus—by whom he has free access to God—is in a state of grace—stands in it by the power of God—has reason to rejoice, come what will, in hope of the glory to be revealed—and whatever he meets with in the way to glory, should increase the rejoicing of his hope, and confirm his heart in the love of God to him. Observe how divinely the apostle speaks—"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we rejoice in tribulations also: knowing well that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us."

What privileges! how many, how free, how blessed are here declared to be the portion of the justified man, which he is to enjoy in his reconciled God! Each of them tending to establish peace in his conscience, and love in his heart, that he may delight himself in God and in his ways. The first and chief blessing in experience, which draws after it all the rest, is the Spirit—

1. "The Holy Ghost is given unto him," to be a witness for Jesus, and to shed abroad the Father's love through him. He comes as the Spirit of life to quicken the soul, which had been dead in tres*passes and sins*, and to bring it to the knowledge of *salvation*, which he does by the gift of faith.

2. "Being justified by faith." He enables the sinner to believe in the finished work of the God-man, and to trust to the free grant of it in the word of God; whereby he sees himself fully justified: through the atonement of Jesus, freed from sin and guilt; through the righteousness of Jesus, entitled to life and glory; and, therefore, he has,

3. "Peace with God through Jesus Christ his Lord." He sees God is at peace with him—perfectly and continually reconciled. The peace is everlasting which was made through the blood of the everlasting covenant. The belief of this quiets and satisfies the sinner's conscience; which, being purged by the blood, and justified by the righteousness of Jesus Christ his Lord, is at peace, is freed from guilty fears, and is reconciled to God, yea, to the justice of God, who can now be just, and yet the justifier of the ungodly. To what high honour is he then called? He is admitted into friendship with God, and has,

4. "Access by faith into this grace wherein he stands"—access to a mercy-seat, to which he is invited to come freely, as a beloved child to an affectionate parent. Boldness and access with confidence are required and commanded: "Let us come boldly to the throne of grace: having boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus," let us by faith make much use of that new and living way which he hath opened for us. O what a mercy is it thus to have access to a gracious Father! How much is the mercy increased by his settling his children in it! "We stand in it," says the apostle, denoting *the being fixed in a state of* perfect acceptance, con-

science, in order that the love of God may rule in the heart. He gives us this account of the privileges of a justified man:—He has peace with God through Jesus—by whom he has free access to God—is in a state of grace—stands in it by the power of God—has reason to rejoice, come what will, in hope of the glory to be revealed—and whatever he meets with in the way to glory, should increase the rejoicing of his hope, and confirm his heart in the love of God to him. Observe how divinely the apostle speaks—"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we rejoice in tribulations also: knowing well that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us."

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ferred by sovereign grace, brought into it by unchangeable love, and kept in it by the power of a faithful God. How strengthening to faith, how encouraging to hope! for,

5. "We rejoice in hope of the glory of God." Faith relies upon the truth of what God hath promised, and hope waits for the enjoyment of the good in the promise, but more especially for the glory which is to be revealed. This hope of glory is full of rejoicing; because every thing which hope looks at and draws its joy from, depends on the truth and faithfulness of a covenant God. There can be no failing on his part, and therefore on the believer's there can be no disappointment. On this ground hope casts its anchor, both sure and steadfast, and finds all safe during the storms of life; yea, has many a sweet foretaste of the promised glory brought into the soul by these very storms: for,

6. "We rejoice in tribulations also." These are so far from taking away the joy of the justified man, that they tend greatly to increase it, and to make it more holy, as well as more happy. Tribulations produce a plentiful harvest of blessings; they bring forth

"Patience," giving occasion to exercise the graces of the Spirit, to find the truth and the power of them, and thereby working submission under the cross to the will of God. "It is good for me," says David, "that I have been afflicted"—his troubles brought him to God. "Before I was afflicted, I went astray." His troubles kept him near to God, dependent on the divine strength to bear with patience, and for a happy issue out of them. Whereby he *learned*

"Experience," which follows suffering and patience. Tribulations teach us what we are as sinners, and what God is to his reconciled children. They make us sensible of our weakness, and of our being strong only in the Lord—of our misery, and of his comforts—of what we deserve, and of what he saves us from—they bring us to live out of ourselves, upon the sure mercies of a covenant God: whereby our hope in him being tried, and by trials confirmed, we discover his love to us in suffering; and, by daily experience, become quite satisfied, that our

"Hope" is in the grace of the Holy Spirit: for it answers the Scripture character; it rejoices in tribulation. It has good reason so to do. It experiences God's faithfulness. Every thing promised being made good to us in time, we thereby grow up in the full assurance of hope, that we shall not fail of receiving the promised glory. And this

"Hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us." He is given to satisfy our hearts of the love of God to us, and to lead us to study the nature and the perfections of his love. Behold! what manner of love, what a free, full, sovereign, and everlasting love the Father hath bestowed upon us! It is actually bestowed and enjoyed by the power of the Holy Ghost. He shows us how the Father loved us, even when we were without strength: yea, herein God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were sinners and enemies, he gave his Son to live and die for us; much more then, being now justified, we shall be saved from wrath, and brought to glory, through him. How

does this commend and set off the love of God! It is the first cause of all the graces here mentioned, and bestows them upon the most unworthy. Faith, justification by faith, access to God, standing in a justified state, rejoicing in hope of glory, and rejoicing in the way to it, even in tribulations, because they exercise and improve patience, and put our graces to such trials, as convince us that they are the true graces of the Holy Spirit, and that we shall never be ashamed of our hope in God. In this golden chain of experience, love is the uppermost link. It was the first, and draws after it all the rest. The free love of the Father gave his Son for us, and with him gave us all things. The same love has now given his Spirit to us, and he has enabled us to know and to believe that we are justified, have access to a reconciled God, stand accepted before him, and that he is our loving God and Father in Jesus. The sense of this warms the heart, and sweetly and powerfully influences the affections to delight in, and to walk in love with, such an exceedingly gracious and merciful God.

In this delightful portion of Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us how he brings sinners to know that God loves them. It is by believing in the righteousness and atonement of the Son of God. Hence spring peace and love—peace with God in the conscience, and love to God in the heart. There is an inseparable connexion between these two graces. The one cannot exist without the other. Whoever knows the God of peace, will find that God is love: for, being justified by faith, he will thereby see that God is at peace with him, and himself in a state of

and adore the exceeding riches of thy Father's grace. He knew how needful afflictions were, both for the flesh and for the spirit; and therefore he appointed thee thy portion, and he has in mercy informed thee of his design in them. He has revealed his will for the ground of thy faith, that when he sends them, thou mightest experience the blessings promised to his suffering children. The belief of his love, in contriving and in proportioning them to the ability given thee to bear them, would administer matter of joy in sorrow, and by trusting to his faithfulness thou wouldst greatly rejoice: thy joy would so far exceed thy sorrow. The heaviness is but for a season—the joy for ever. The heaviness only during the trial of faith—the joy increased by that very trial. The trial was only to prove the truth of faith, and to evidence the power of it—not to weaken, but to strengthen it—not to destroy, but to refine it. The refiner does not intend to lose one atom of his gold, but puts it into the fire to purge away the dross. So does God. "When he hath tried me," says Job, "I shall come forth as gold." He was tried in the fire, and his faith was found unto praise, and honour, and glory. Therefore he is set forth for an example of suffering affliction and of patience. Behold, we account them happy, not who suffer, but who endure suffering. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord—that the Lord abounds in compassion, and is of tender mercy. O my soul, wait upon the same Lord, and he will bring all thy trials to the same blessed end. He has the same pity and mercy to thee as he had to Job. Thou hast the same reason to believe it as he had. Thy

faith, and the only ground of his love. The Scripture has clearly determined this—"We love him, because he first loved us.—And in this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him." When the Holy Ghost has taught this love of God to sinners, and by believing has manifested it to their hearts, then they love him upon Christian principles; and sinners cannot love him upon any other. They love him for that infinite mercy, which led him to send his only-begotten Son into the world, to finish the salvation of his people. They love him for sending the Holy Ghost to enable them to see the everlasting sufficiency of this salvation, and to believe the record of God concerning it: whereby they come to experience how much the Father loved them. This is heaven begun. The Father's love shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost, is the foretaste of glory. Whoever enjoys it, has found what is more to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honey-comb. O! it is indeed heaven upon earth. To preserve it, to improve it, is become the only study of the happy believer. The panting of his soul is after more of this love. The prayer of his faith is, 'O thou eternal Spirit! help me so to walk with my most loving Father, as that I may maintain peace with him in my conscience, and a growing love to him in my heart, until thou bring me to the enjoyment of everlasting peace and love!'

The prayer of a righteous man prevaileth much, being offered with energy. By the love of the Spirit it is answered. He not only preserves, but also in-

creases his own graces. He leads the believer to fresh discoveries of the Father's love, and puts him into possession of the exceeding rich treasures of it. He helps him to draw very strong arguments for the comfort of his heart, from the perfect freshness of divine love. Thus he reasons:

Although I am beset with temptations, and assaulted with corruptions, and in a world of troubles, yet I need not fear but God will bring me safe through all; for I know he loves me. It is plain he does. I could never have loved him, unless he had first freely loved me. My love is only the reflection of his. I have been convinced of sin, but it was not from myself: the conviction was of God. I have been convinced of righteousness, and I put my whole trust in the righteousness of Jesus. He is the only ground of my hope. I now rest my soul upon the sure foundation which he hath laid. And this faith is not of myself. It is the gift of God. I ascribe it to his sovereign grace, that I have been enabled to look upon the Father as reconciled to me, pardoning me through the blood-shedding of his Son, accounting me righteous through the obedience of his Son, and in him accepting, loving, and blessing me. How could I experience these things but by the power of the Holy Ghost? And for what did I deserve to experience them? The reason must be found in the riches of his own free grace. Did the Father foresee any thing good in me, for which he chose me in his Son? Was it for any worthiness of mine, that the Son vouchsafed to take flesh, and to live and die for me? Was it for any foreseen works, faithfulness, or diligence in means, that the

Holy Ghost called me to know, to believe, and to enjoy the Father's love through the Son's salvation? O no! Away with such thoughts. I dare claim nothing for my own but sin and shame. Not unto me, Lord, not unto me, but unto thee be all the glory. It was the good pleasure of thine own will, which chose me before the foundation of the world, and accepted me in the Beloved; and now I know that thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth. I experience the happy fruit and effect of them. I am brought to believe in thee, and to love my God and Father, which I am satisfied I could never have done, if thy free love had not first purposed to save me, and now carried thy purposes into execution. To the praise of the glory of thy distinguishing grace, I am in possession of the things which accompany salvation. O give me more grace, that I may daily make use of them, and may return thee better praise for thy free gifts of free grace.

It is free, and it is also COVENANT love. This is another of its divine properties. God commendeth his love towards the heirs of promise, by giving them full security for its unchangeableness. And this view the Holy Spirit opens to them for the support of their faith in times of trial. When they are walking in darkness and have no light, troubled on every side, without are fightings, within are fears, when in great heaviness through failings in duty, through risings of corruption, or through manifold temptations, then he discovers to them the treasures of covenant love, and enables them to draw rich consolation from that heavenly storehouse. An heir of promise under his teaching, is often supported in this

way:—It is true, I am in trouble, but not forsaken. What if every thing I have and am in myself makes against me, yet God is on my side, a covenant God: for I believe the Eternal Three entered into covenant before all worlds, and with manifold wisdom ordered all things relating to the heirs of promise. For their sakes, and to end all strife in their consciences about the certainty of their salvation, it pleased the blessed Trinity to enter into covenant, and to confirm their covenant by oath, thus giving them two immutable things to trust in, in which it is impossible for God to lie. O how strengthening to faith is this view of the unchangeableness of covenant love! If it be but a man's covenant, being properly signed and sealed, no one disannulleth or addeth thereto. And who shall disannul or add to the covenant of the Trinity? The creature cannot. God will not. His purpose of bringing many sons to glory is unalterably fixed in his own mind; and, in order to make it a sure ground for their faith, he confirmed his immutable covenant by his immutable oath. On this security I rest my soul. A covenant God has enabled me to trust in his covenant engagements. Hence I see every thing relating to my salvation, absolutely certain in the counsel and covenant of God; and I look upon my faith to be one of the effects of my being in the covenant. And faith, as a covenant gift, is an immutable gift. What a blessing is it, that the gifts and calling of God are without repentance! It has been given me on the behalf of Christ to believe. And is not this from covenant love? What else would bring me to trust in covenant faithfulness? Therefore, by believing, I have immutable things to

depend upon for the certainty of my salvation. Upon them would I stay my soul, as well as I may, and fix my heart upon them. O that I could bring more glory to my covenant God, by trusting him with unshaken confidence! His love to me demands it at my hands. His love contrived the plan of salvation. Love provided every thing needful to carry it into execution. The evidence which he has given of this, was from the overflowings of love. His word of promise, ratified by covenant, confirmed by oath, the oath of the holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, made to satisfy the heirs of promise of the immutability of the divine will concerning them—O what miracles of love are these! And all to assure them, that the heart of Jehovah is invariably towards them for good! Yes, Lord, this is the great love wherewith thou lovest me. And this is the evidence of love. Thou hast brought me to believe it, and to put some honour upon it. I desire to trust to thy covenant engagements without wavering. Establish, strengthen, settle my faith. Increase it from day to day, that I may grow in the knowledge and experience of that love which passeth knowledge. For

It is a free covenant, and also an EVERLASTING love. This is another of its most glorious properties. His love knows neither beginning nor end. It is without variableness, or shadow of turning. The heart of God is always one and the same towards his chosen people; for he loveth them freely: the motives to it were all in, and from his own breast. The covenant was distinguishing love, secured to the heirs of promise by the most solemn engagements. And this *crowns all.* His love is of the same date with the

covenant—not only before all worlds, but also from eternity. Therefore it is frequently called in Scripture an everlasting covenant, and covenant-love is said to be according to the eternal purpose, which he had purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: whereby, before the foundations of the world were laid, he hath constantly decreed by his counsel, secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honour. Here is a never-failing source of comfort to a believing heart. Meditate, O my soul, upon it. Consider what God hath done for thee, and give him the glory of his precious love. Has he not called thee by his Spirit, working in thee in due season? Hast thou not obeyed the call? Dost thou not depend upon the finished work of God thy Saviour? Art thou not justified freely by faith in him? Art thou not seeking daily to mortify the works of the flesh, and thy earthly members, and that thy mind may be drawn up to high and heavenly things? Certainly these are good proofs of the Father's love towards thee; because these are the happy effects of his purposes now taking place in thy soul. O how greatly should this consideration establish and confirm thy faith of eternal salvation to be enjoyed by Christ, and thereby kindle thy love towards God! He has, indeed, drawn thee by the sweet attraction of his Spirit unto himself, and he has explained to thee the motive for his so doing—"Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee." His love, discovered to thee in time, is the fruit of his love before time,

troubles come great and heavy, thou mayest possess thy soul in patience, so long as the Lord shall please to exercise thee with them. And never forget that he will certainly come, and quickly. Let this promise keep thee from fainting. He will come in with his support; he will administer his comforts under the cross; he will remove it in due season. What can be required for the establishing of thy heart, which is not promised thee in this scripture: "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For it is but a very little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry." Wait then on the Lord, O my soul! be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart; wait, I say, on the Lord.

Perhaps thou art ready to reply—'I have waited long, but am still to learn; for my trials are so varied, that as soon as I have been well exercised with one sort, presently it is changed, and another comes to which I was not accustomed. And this continually, like Job's messengers, one after another; and still the last brings a sadder message than the former. Hard and long trials I have endured, but this constant change of them wearies me out; they come so unexpected, they find me so unprepared, they so harass my troubled mind, that I am ready to sink under them,—frequently I am tempted to think, that if God loved me, he would not delight in afflicting me in this manner.'

Thus the carnal mind is apt to reason against God and his ways; but when the believer goes into the

sanctuary and consults the oracle, he receives an answer of grace and peace, and is satisfied that this change of trial is nothing new with God. It is his usual method of training up his children in faith and patience. He appoints troubles for the exercise, and all sorts of troubles for the improvement of their graces. The Captain of their salvation was made perfect through sufferings; so are all the soldiers of Jesus Christ. It was the remark of one of his champions—"Many are the troubles of the righteous." The apostle James, speaking of the persecuted Hebrews, says, "They had divers temptations, different one from another;" and his brother Peter tries to comfort them under their manifold afflictions, many in number, succeeding as fast as wave follows after wave; and of many kinds: some distressed them in their bodies, others in their minds, in their character, in their substance, in their families, in every way that affliction could be felt. Patience is the grace suited to all these trials; because it bears them in the strength of God: for it consists in trusting to his sure word of promise, and believing it against sense and feeling. Faith says, This present trial comes from the love of my covenant God: Patience says, Then I will bear it, till he bring it to a good issue. Whatever the trial be, patience has the same promise, and the same promise-keeping God to trust in. If he send variety of trials, it is only to give a variety of proofs, that he is faithful who hath promised. He knows we have divers diseases, which must have divers remedies to heal them. We have manifold evils in us, which require manifold afflictions to subdue them. And our God intends to give

Spirit? Therefore the Three that bear record in heaven, do witness to thy being an object of covenant love. Does this witness keep thy conscience quiet, and thy heart happy? Canst thou plead it against guilt and fear, and maintain the influence of it in dark and trying times? The love of thy heavenly Father is immutable: dost thou experience it to be so? It is everlasting: canst thou depend upon it as such? It has provided all blessings for thee in Jesus: art thou receiving them out of his fulness, grace for grace? It is proposed to thy faith in John xvii. and in Eph. iii. as a never-failing spring of consolation. Read and try, whether thou art practically acquainted with what is there written. Examine the character of the Father's love; and be assured, what is not agreeable to it, is not the teaching of the Holy Spirit. His office in thy soul is to witness to what he has revealed in the Scripture, to explain it to thine understanding, to make it the ground of thy faith, and the enjoyment of thy heart. Dost thou then understand, and believe, and enjoy the Father's love, according to what the Holy Spirit has testified of it?

Perhaps thou art clear in thine understanding, but through the weakness of thy faith hast but little enjoyment of the love of God. Why is thy faith weak? Search into the cause, (depend upon it God is not the cause,) and having discovered it, inquire into the remedy. There is provision made in the covenant for all the infirmities of thy faith; for it was well ordered in all things and sure, and thy faith was well ordered and sure,—infallible securities were provided in the covenant to make it sure. That thou shouldst have it, that thou shouldst keep it, and

these considerations silence the murmurings! If the trial be new to them, yet it is common to man. If it be hard to bear, yet grace is almighty to strengthen patience. If it last long, yet it shall end well. How convincing are these reasons! How patiently should believers, influenced by them, submit to the chastening of the Lord! And yet there is still unbelief in them, which will be urging fresh complaints, and stirring up impatience.

The poor sufferer, feeling his smart, is apt to think —'Any cross but mine would be tolerable—I should not say one word against God, if he tried me with any other; but this cuts me to the heart—O it is a very agony both to my flesh and spirit—there is nothing like it—it is so exactly calculated to cross my temper, to hurt me in the tenderest part, and to rob me of my most beloved gratification, that it is the very thing in the world from which I could have wished to be exempted—Any cross, Lord, but this.'

Nay, but, O man, who art thou that repliest thus against God? Hold thy tongue as it were with a bridle. Let not self-will murmur, and folly speak against the chastening of the Lord. He says that he is dealing with thee as with sons. Where is thy faith, then, that sense and feeling should be permitted to plead, and to be heard against the witness of God in his word? Where is thy patience, that thou canst not bear the present cross, but wouldst take up any other? Alas, alas! mistaken man—what canst thou bear in thine own strength? Thou feelest the smart of thy present cross, and it makes thee peevish and fretful: the smart of any other would have the very same effect. A less than this—

When thou art considering thy love to God, and ashamed at the sight of it, then look at his. Look especially at his, when thine is little. Believing views of his will increase thine. Thine has nothing else to excite it, or to nourish it. Thou art not called upon to warm thyself with the sparks of thy love to God, but with the pure constant flame of his love to thee. His is to keep up thine. His is the first cause, and thine is but the effect. The experience of his will heal all the infirmities of thine. When thy love is little, unsettled, cold, and dull, then study the divine properties of his: these rightly understood, will increase, settle, warm, and actuate thine affections. By believing meditation thou wilt find a pardon provided for thy little love: the sense of it will comfort thy conscience. Thy heart will grow hot within thee; while thou art musing the fire will kindle. It will break out. Thou wilt speak with thy tongue, praise and thanksgiving to thy loving God and Father.

Thou art willing then, O my soul, and ready to set out to follow thy God. Under the influence of the Holy Spirit thou hast chosen him for thy portion, and in a constant dependence upon his grace thou hast taken his way for thy daily walk. How great is the love wherewith he loveth thee! Survey it. Measure, if thou canst, the dimensions of it in thine own particular case. The more thou art acquainted with it, the readier wilt thou be to give him all the glory of it, and to make such acknowledgments as these:—

I speak the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that

ıeing justified by faith, I have found peace, and free ıccess to a reconciled God. We are agreed, and ıow I desire to walk with him. He is my Father ı Jesus, and I know he has bowels of the tenderest ffection for me. I ought not, it would be base in ne to question it, since he has shed his love abroad ı my heart by the Holy Ghost; who has made me f one mind, of one heart, and of one way with himelf. His way is become mine; for he has reconiled me to it, by causing me to see that he has hosen me freely, as an object of his electing love, hat he gave his Son to finish salvation-work for me, ınd that he has now given his Spirit to me, who has alled me, and given me ears to hear, who has beıtowed on me faith and hope, and has enabled me to ook upon these as fruits of the Father's covenant grace, and everlasting favour. O what exceeding riches of love are these! If I would declare and peak of them, they are more than can be numbered. What am I, that I should be accepted in the Beoved? His Father is mine. He sees me, loves me, yea, blesses me in him. My title is clear to all spiitual blessings, because, God being my God in Jesus, ıll things are mine. He will make them all work ogether for my good. He that withheld not his wn Son, but gave him for me, how shall he not with ıim freely give me all things? Having his free grant of them in the word of promise, and trusting o his faithfulness, I have set out to walk with my livine Friend and Father, hoping to enjoy his loving presence all the way to heaven. I would not aim at getting any new title to his love, but to have new enjoyment. Every day I am seeking for more know-

ledge, and for more experience of his abundant love to me in his beloved Son. And for this end, I would walk close with him in his way,—not to buy his love, it is inestimable,—not to merit it, free grace and merit cannot stand together,—not that I may deserve it for my walk, but may freely receive it of him in my walk,—not that he may give it me for walking with him, but that in walking with him I may enjoy what he has already given me. His love is a free gift. I would by faith enjoy it in time, as I hope by sense to enjoy it in eternity. Whatever blessings, strength, victory, or comfort I stand in need of, I look to the fulness which he has laid up in Jesus, and from thence I receive it. I read my title to it, and I take possession of it, for nothing done in me or by me, now or at any other time, but only in and for the free grace of his Father and my Father. While I can live thus by simple faith, I find I am enabled to go on well. The sense of his free, covenant, everlasting love, keeps my heart happy, and makes walking with him my delight. O that he may enable me to press forward, that I may hold my confidence, and the rejoicing of hope, steadfast unto the end! And why need I doubt of it, since he has me in his keeping? His love has bound itself to me by covenant engagements, which are my full security for what he has declared—"I will never leave thee nor forsake thee."

These desires, I am persuaded, are from thee, O Father of mercies! I could never have sought my happiness in thy love, unless thou hadst first loved me. O grant me then the desires of my heart! What thy good Spirit has put me upon seeking, let

me, by his grace, find continually. He has manifested to me thy perfect reconciliation to thy people, through the life and death of Jesus. It has been given me on his behalf to believe this. I have therefore taken thee for my God and my portion, and I would so walk with thee as to obtain a growing knowledge and experience of thy love. For this cause I bow my knees unto thee, Holy Father. O hear and answer the prayer of faith! Give me grace to walk with thee in love, all the way to glory. I ask it in the name of Jesus: for thou art the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named. One Father, one family, one love. Thou receivest all thy children, whether in heaven or earth, into the same near relation, and embracest them with the same dear affection in thy beloved Son. O what a mercy is this! Blessed, for ever blessed be thy fatherly love, which chose me to be of thy family, and which has brought me to know that I am a child of God, by faith in Christ Jesus. I thank thee for giving me the desire to live as such, and to walk worthy of my high calling. O grant me, then, according to the riches of thy glory, (out of thine infinite treasury of grace, and to the praise of the glory of thy grace,) to be strengthened with might by thy Spirit in the inner man. He is the promise of the Father. All thy children have their new birth, and every faculty of the new man from him, and by the working of his mighty power they are kept, as well as renewed, day by day: for without him they can do nothing. Of this he has thoroughly convinced me. I know I cannot call thee Father, nor believe in thee, nor love thee, but by thy Spirit. O

my God, strengthen me effectually by his grace in the inner man, for every purpose of spiritual life! Whatever he has engaged to do in thy children, let him do it in me, that through his presence and power Christ may dwell in my heart by faith. O let him continually discover to me mine interest in Christ, and open to me the exceeding riches of thy love in him! Holy Father, let thy good Spirit abide with me, that I may know for certain Christ is one with me, and I am one with him, and may thereby be able to maintain constant fellowship with him—he dwelling in me, and I in him. O may I thus live continually by the faith of the Son of God, depending always for acceptance with thee upon his atonement and his righteousness, and so may find the happy fruit of his prayer to thee—"O righteous Father, I have declared to my disciples thy name, and will declare it, that the love wherewith thou lovest me may be in them, and I in them." Thou didst hear, thou hast answered times out of number, the request of thy beloved Son. Lord God, answer it to me. Let me rejoice in thy love, and find it to be the same to me as to him. Let thy good Spirit root me and ground me in the knowledge of thy love to me in Jesus. O grant me to be deeply rooted in the experience of it, that my faith, working by love, may bring forth much fruit to thy glory, and I may become so grounded in love, as to stand unshaken, like a house built upon a rock, against every attack made upon my love to thee. O my God and Father, my heart is naked and open to thee. Thou knowest the secrets of it. Thou seest how fervently I pray for the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit. My prayer comes from a fed-

ng sense of my want of him, and from a dependence on thy promise to give the Spirit to them that ask him. Lord, I ask. Grant me to be strengthened by him, with every needful gift and grace in the inner man. Send him to manifest plainer and plainer my union with Jesus, in order to my keeping up communion with him; that, having him dwelling in my heart by faith, I may be so established in the experience of thy love to me in him, as to be able to comprehend, with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of thy love. All the saints comprehend it; but the saints below less than they above. And some of them below comprehend more than others. I know but little: O my God, increase my knowledge of thy love in Jesus! Whereunto I have attained, establish me; and keep me pressing forward for clearer discoveries of it. Help me to survey it, so far as faith is able, in its most glorious dimensions, and to praise thee for mine experience of its rich mercies. Holy Father, teach me still more by thy Spirit of the boundless freeness, and of the endless fulness of thy love—let me know thy love in Christ, which passeth knowledge. Although I cannot know it as it is, my limited understanding being incapable of measuring the infinity of thy love, yet for this very reason let me be daily studying to know more of it—growing up into Christ Jesus by faith—abounding in hope by the power of the Holy Ghost; and increasing in the love of God. Holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, let me thus partake of the fulness of grace below, grace for grace, till I partake of the fulness of glory above; that I may be filled with all the fulness which is of

God, with which thou hast promised to fill thy children in earth and heaven. O magnify thy love towards me according to its greatness, and not according to my deserts or to my prayers. I know thou canst do exceeding abundantly above all that I can ask or think, according to the power that worketh effectually in me. Thy power engaged to act for me is the support of my faith, and mine encouragement in my prayer. It is an infinite and almighty power, which has graciously begun, and has hitherto prosperously carried on the good work in my soul. To it all things are possible. Lord forbid I should doubt of thy granting the petitions, which I have been offering up unto thee in thy Son's name. That which thou hast promised, thou art able also to perform. O my God and Father, set thy power to work more effectually in me. Let the Spirit of might enlarge my thoughts of, and my faith in, thy precious love. Let me experience daily, how much more thou art able to do than I have yet obtained; to give, than I have yet asked; to increase, than I have yet thought. And whatever increase thou givest, may it draw out mine affections in greater love to thee and to thy ways, and so be the means of bringing more glory to thee. For thy love in Jesus, the whole family in heaven and earth is ascribing honour and praise. Accept my thanks, Holy Father, together with theirs. To thee be glory in the church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

CHAPTER IV.

The believer goes on successfully, while he walks by faith in a constant dependence upon his reconciled God and loving Father.

The leading principle upon which he sets out is this:—God is my God and Father. He is perfectly reconciled unto me, and my conscience is at peace with him, through faith in his beloved Son. He loves me in him. He has manifested it plainly to me, and now my heart would cleave to him as my most tender parent. I would rest in my love to him, as he rests in his love to me. It is entirely through the grace of the eternal Spirit, that I have been enabled thus to believe in the finished work of Jesus, and to experience the Father's love in him. By which means I have been satisfied of the love of the ever-blessed Trinity to my soul. Father, Son, and Spirit, have covenanted to make me an heir of God, and a joint-heir with Christ. From my belief and experience of these truths, I have been enabled to choose God for my portion. His will is become mine. His appointed way is my course; and now I desire so to walk with him, as to maintain in my conscience the peace of God, and in my heart the love of God. I do not expect any new title to these inestimable graces. My claim is good and valid under Christ. I would not disparage it, by supposing that my close walk with God was to make any atonement for my sins, or to be the least part of my

justifying righteousness. I have these already, and perfectly too, in Jesus. The enjoyment of them is the thing I want. I am seeking for more of that peace with and love to the Father, to which I am entitled in his Son. His fulness, the fulness of him that filleth all in all, is mine. A free grant of it has passed in the court of heaven, has been revealed in the record of truth, and I by believing have accepted the grant. I am in possession of its privileges, and am enjoying its blessings. On the fulness of Jesus I live this day. Out of it I hope to be receiving every grace which I shall want for my safe and happy walk with his Father and my Father. Bless the Lord, O my soul, for what thou knowest and hast experienced of his abundant grace; which has enabled thee thus to walk with thy reconciled God and loving Father. This day thou art called upon to maintain peace with him in thy conscience, and love to him in thy heart—peace like his, flowing from the sense of his being perfectly reconciled to thee—love like his, the happy fruit of his unchangeable love to thee. Whatever thou meetest with in thy work or warfare, ought not to lessen, but ought to exercise and to improve those graces. Never forget that he is thy God—the God of peace. He stands related to thee in the dearest and most indissoluble bond of love. He is thy Father in Jesus. Keep the sense of this always fresh upon thy mind, and thy steps will be ordered aright. Nothing will be able to stop thee in the way to heaven, or to seduce thee out of it; but every thing will bring thee forward. Whilst thou canst maintain peace and love, thou wilt go on prosperously against guilt and

self-righteousness, against the wiles and assaults of thy spiritual foes, against the world which lieth in wickedness, and against every inward and outward trial. The Lord being on thy side, all these shall work together, under him, for thy good; and they shall be the means of making thee walk safely in the way, and of bringing thee happily to the end of it. The apostle has given us the whole plan in few words —"We walk," says he, "by faith, and not by sight." We direct our Christian course by believing, and not by seeing. Faith is to us the evidence of things not seen, and the ground of our hoping to enjoy them. We believe upon the authority of God's word, that they are what he describes them to be; for faith, as a grace of the Spirit, consists in giving credit to what God says. If it be a truth proposed to the understanding, faith relies upon the infallible word. If it be a promise, faith depends upon the arm of God to make it good. And whatever he has promised, faith (when it is as it should be) does not stagger at difficulties, but rests fully persuaded, that what God hath promised, he is able also to perform. Faith looks at the word spoken, and overlooks seeming impossibilities. THUS SAITH THE LORD—that is enough for faith—full of satisfying evidence: for it knows, that to speak and to do are the same thing with an unchangeable God.

How many errors in judgment, and consequent mistakes in practice, prevail at this day, chiefly arising from confounding faith with its fruits; and from not distinguishing between the word of God believed, and what will follow upon believing it aright! Thus, some make assurance to be of the essence of faith,

others make it appropriation, and many make it consist in an impression upon the mind, that Christ loved me, and gave himself for me. These are fruits—what faith should produce, but not what it is. These are effects of faith working, and not definitions of the nature of faith. A believer should be exhorted to make his calling and election sure; for it is his privilege. He ought to give all diligence to attain assurance, to appropriate Christ with all his blessings to himself, and to be clearly persuaded that Christ loved him, and gave himself for him. These are blessed fruits of believing. May God give his people more of them. But then the tree must be before the fruits, and the fruits grow upon the tree. Faith is first, and faith derives its being from believing the word of God, and all its fruits are continued acts of believing. And when you hear of believing, do you not always think of something spoken? You cannot separate these two in your mind. Something has been said and proposed to you before your belief can be called for. If nothing has been said, belief has no exercise. Faith and the word of God therefore are related, as the effect and the cause: because "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." What God hath spoken in his word, demands belief from all that hear it. When faith cometh by hearing, then we assent to the truth of what God hath said, and we rely upon his faithfulness to make good what he has promised. Assurance is this faith grown to its full stature: but we are not born six feet high. Appropriation is a very comfortable acting of faith, when a man is persuaded of his interest in covenant mercies; and, from what

he then feels, can say, 'Christ loved me, and gave himself for me:' but he has not this comfort in times of heaviness; he may be walking in darkness, and having no light, yea, in the hidings of the Lord's countenance, and yet even then he may trust simply to what God hath spoken; which is true faith, and more exalted faith, than that which draws its evidence from its appropriating acts and its present experience. The more a man trusts to sense, the less he lives by faith; for sensible feelings are not faith. Impressions are not believing. I see the sun—I hear a sound—I feel an object: faith hath no place in these instances. Its essence is believing and trusting what God hath spoken. If his word be believed, and by believing the conscience find peace and the heart joy: these are joy and peace IN believing. They come from believing, are its effects, and no more enter into the essence of faith, than comfortable feelings do into the essence of a man. He is as truly a man when miserable, as he is when comfortable.

These mistakes should be carefully guarded against, because they are chiefly pernicious to the children of God; who are kept by them from growing up into assurance, into appropriation, and into the sensible experience of God's love to them in Christ Jesus. They are puzzled—they are misled, by being told that they have no faith, if they have no assurance, &c. They examine themselves, but cannot find any such faith. This discourages them. They are tempted to think they have no true faith, because they have not what certain persons talk of. But if they would adhere strictly to the word of

God, and would take their ideas from it, they would see how simple and plain a thing believing is, and would soon be satisfied that they were true believers. Which conviction would have many blessed effects, especially these—it would put them on seeking for an increase of faith, and upon expecting the proper fruits of faith. What nourishes faith, ripens them; for they cannot be produced so long as persons are doubtful whether they have any faith at all. They would see how desirable it is to believe without doubt or wavering, what honour it puts upon God's word, what comfort it brings to them. And they would be waiting in the appointed means for grace to maintain, for grace to improve their faith, that they may be going on from faith to faith. While this was their end and aim, faith in act and exercise, maintained and improved, would bring in daily growing evidence of their being indeed partakers of the faith of God's elect. Living by faith, walking by faith, would demonstrate to them their spiritual life and walk, as plainly as natural life and walk can be demonstrated by outward actions.

Here is great need, O my soul, to read the Scripture and to pray for the Spirit of wisdom. Read, pray much, lest thou shouldst err concerning the faith. Every error will be a stumbling-block in the way of thy holy walk, and make thee tired of it, or seduce thee out of it. Let it be one of thy daily petitions—'Lord, save me from all mistakes concerning the faith of the gospel;' and let the word of God, by which faith cometh and groweth, be thy daily study. This is thy present business. Now set out trusting to what God hath spoken, and relying on

what he hath promised. On this principle proceed, as it is laid down by the apostle, "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him." He is expressing his joy at his beholding their order, and the steadfastness of their faith in Christ, and he would teach them how to maintain their faith throughout their Christian course. How did you receive Christ at first? Was it not by believing? Receiving Christ and believing in him, are, in John i. 12. supposed to mean the same thing. And our Lord says, that "they who believe in him through the word, are one with him." Christ then is received by faith; and by the same faith, by the belief of the same word of God, we walk in him, so as to be rooted and grounded and established in the faith. Our walk is in him, not any thing distant from him; but is the effect of union with him. By him we live, in him we walk,—rooted in him, we grow as a branch in the vine—built up in him, we are fixed as a building on a sure foundation, and thereby we become established and strengthened in the faith. Every step we take is by faith, by the same faith wherewith Christ was received. He must be received always, as he was received once. There is no change of object, and there must be no change of faith, but the same continued trust on his word, and the same dependence on his promised strength. We never set out to walk with a reconciled God, till we are one with Christ by faith, and know our union with him, and our walk is in consequence of this. If we go on at all, it is by communion with him. We can receive only out of his fulness, grace for grace, to make us willing and able

to go forward. Our fellowship with him is in every part and in every moment of our walk, and this is as necessary as our fellowship with the air and elements of this world is to every thing that concerns our natural walk. Our wisdom to guide our steps, our progress in the way, our courage and strength, our warfare and victory, every grace and every blessing is received by faith, and is the effect of our communion with Jehovah Jesus. We trust in his word, we rely on his arm, we wait on his faithfulness, and so go forward; for he makes good what he had promised to give us in our walk, which confirms the peace of God, establishes our hearts in his love, increases our faith, and thereby makes our daily walk more comfortable to us, and more glorious to him.

But if faith consist in believing and trusting the word of God, it may be inquired, 'How shall we know the difference between true and false, between dead and living faith?' It may be known from the cause. The fruit of the Spirit is faith. He produces it. It is the gift bestowed by his operation, continued by his power, increased by his blessing, and carried on to the end, by his never leaving nor forsaking his own work. And he makes it known to be his. He gives eyes to see it, and hearts to acknowledge it. Therefore the apostle says of them who have received the Spirit of God, that they know the things which are freely given to them of God: by faith they both know the reality, and also taste the sweetness of those free gifts of free grace.

It may be known from the effects. Dead faith brings forth nothing. Living faith is fruitful. It *produces* a hearty trust in the truth of what God

hath spoken, and a quiet reliance on the faithfulness of what God hath promised. It gives him credit for the finished salvation of his Son, and puts honour upon his record concerning it; whereby peace is received into the conscience, and love into the heart. Upon which there follows a settled dependence upon this reconciled God and loving Father, for the fulfilling of every promise, and this is improved by daily experience. He that trusteth in the Lord is never confounded. God is faithful. His promises cannot fail. Blessed is the man that trusteth in him. The Lord God will be a sun and a shield unto him: the Lord will give him grace and glory.

As for the hypocrites, it is not so with them. The Holy Spirit was not the author of their faith. It was a fancy of their own, formed in their heads, without any warrant from God. There was no life in it, and no living effects from it. There was the form, and nothing more. They made a profession, but never came to any enjoyment. They had no vital union, and therefore they could not have any real communion with Christ. They could not, as the apostle expresses it, walk in him; and therefore, in the hour of temptation they fell away, and came to nothing. Take heed then, O my soul, of mistakes. Examine carefully of what sort thy faith is. Bring it to the standard of Scripture, and see what went before believing—see whether thou dost now from thy heart believe what God hath spoken—wait for the effects. Dost thou so trust his word, as to take him for thy God and thy portion? Art thou walking with him? And art thou depending on him to bestow the promised graces and blessings on

thee in thy walk? If this be thine experience, thou art set out well: go on. Remember where every thing relating to thy walk is to be had. The Father's love has laid it up all in the Son's fulness, and it is the office of the Holy Spirit to teach thee how to receive out of it grace for grace. He teaches by his word. With this in thy hand, and his light in thine understanding, read and study what he has promised thee for thy safe, happy, and holy walk. Take no step without the direction of his word, and expect at every step that he will make good to thee what he has promised. Thou wilt very soon find the necessity of this dependence upon him; for, ere thou hast well begun thy walk, thou wilt be called upon to exercise thy faith, and to put it to trial. Thou wilt meet with many things in thee averse to this holy walk, and many more to distress thee in it. The body of sin, the old man, the flesh, with all its affections and lusts, are still in thee. It is of their nature to be lusting, and to be always putting forth some filthy motions, in order to draw thee to walk after the flesh, and not after the Spirit. The tempter helps them all he can. He knows how to improve them to his own interest; and if, from what is passing within thee, there be a sight and sense of sin, then if he can get thee to look at it in his view, he will act upon thy legal and self-righteous temper, and will inject such vile insinuations as these against the Lord and against his Christ:—

How is it that I am yet the subject of sin? It is still in me. It cleaves to me, as the flesh to my bones, and it mixes so with my duties, that I cannot *perform* them without it. I sometimes fear I am

nothing but sin. When I attempt to walk with God, ere I set out, something evil arises within me, and stops me. Some proud unbelieving thought, some sensual affection, some worldly disposition, some corruption or other, is ever at hand to hinder my course. What then must I think of myself? I scarce know what. Things, I see, do not grow better. I have been long hoping for it; but I find there still dwelleth no good thing in me: so that I am almost ready to question the truth of my grace, and it is with great difficulty I can keep up any peace in my conscience. When the believer is attacked in this manner, (and who is not, at some time or other?) how is he to defend himself? Will his skilfulness in the word of righteousness, and his faith in the word of reconciliation, keep him safe in the hour of temptation? Yes. By the grace of the Holy Spirit, the lessons before learned will be enforced and brought into use. This is the time to maintain faith in the atonement, and in the righteousness of the God-man. Now it is to be tried in the fire; and it is put to the trial, that it may come out of it like gold, proved to be sterling metal, and refined from its dross—better in every respect for having gone through the fire. The trial of faith is far more precious than that of gold which perisheth. It is therefore put into the furnace, that the believer may know the truth of it, and may experience the blessings of it. Faith conflicting with unbelief is a good fight—sometimes sharp, but always profitable. The flesh may be weak and ready to yield, faith may be hard put to it, but victory is certain. During the battle, the warrior is invincible in the whole

armour of God. He takes to him the shield of faith, and holds it up against the fiery darts of Satan. He draws out the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, and with it he defeats Satan. He consults or remembers a scripture suitable to his present case, and this, being sent home by the Holy Spirit, puts an end to the engagement, and restores and settles sweet peace in the conscience. How often has he applied the following passage, which the Lord speaks concerning his true Israelites!—"They shall be my people, and I will be their God; and I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them: and I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good; but I will put my fear into their hearts, that they shall not depart from me: yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good."

What strong consolation is there in this scripture! Every sentence has an argument in it, tending to establish peace with God, and to maintain it in the midst of war. How quieting and satisfying to the troubled conscience is his covenant purpose! "They shall be my people, and I will be their God." They shall, because I will. My will shall make them willing. And in the day of my power, when my purpose takes place, I will give them one heart, turned to myself, and one way, to walk with me by faith, as obedient children with their loving Father. This I will do for them, that they may fear me for ever, that the fear of offending me may rule always and by all means in their hearts.

O what promises are these! What can weak

and the Son, by the Holy Spirit. He stands related to the Eternal Three in their covenant offices, and he receives freely, in believing, the covenant blessings of each.

Among these blessings the cross is not the least: for it is mercifully appointed to be the means of bringing sinners to this divine fellowship. They go on stubbornly after their own hearts, and in the error of their own ways, until the Lord sends some trouble to stop them. They look wishfully at the gilded cup of pleasure, and drink greedily of its sweets, without any fear of the deadly poison mixed up with it. But when God convinces of sin, then comes sorrow: they feel the poison working, in a sense of guilt and dread of punishment, which teach the want of a Saviour, and are a good schoolmaster to bring them unto Christ. So God dealt with the chief of the Old Testament sinners—a giant in iniquity, who surpassed all that were before him in Jerusalem for idolatry and blood-shedding. The Lord sent his prophets to warn him of his guilt, but he would not hearken. He hardened his heart, till the Lord brought upon him the captains of the host of the king of Assyria, who took Manasseh among the thorns, and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon: and when he was in affliction, he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, and prayed unto him; and he was entreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem, into his kingdom; then Manasseh knew that the Lord he was God.—His case was not singular. It is a common thing with the Lord to send affliction

self. I will give them grace to walk close wi
and to fear me always. I have covenanted
the means as well as the end; and I will kee
by my almighty power, till they receive the
their faith, even the salvation of their souls.
I will rejoice over them to do them good."
confirms all the rest. His purpose of doing
good, his executing it, his continuing it, his
ing it through time and through eternity, is a
of rejoicing to the Lord God. He delights
It always was, and always will be, the joy of hi
his crown and glory. He will not, he cannot
prived of his joy. Consider this, thou po
tressed soul, who art in heaviness through m
temptations, and ready to faint through the we
of thy faith. Take courage. Thy salvation
Thy Father, who is in heaven, rejoices in it:
save; he will rejoice over thee with joy; he w
in his love; he will joy over thee with singing.
his joy too shall be thine. As sure as Go
Zion, thou shalt return and come to Zion with
and everlasting joy upon thy head; thou shalt
joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing sh
away for ever.

O what a discovery is here of the ever-
heart of our heavenly Father! What more
he promise, in order to put an end to all strife
consciences of his afflicted children? He h
gaged in a covenant of peace to do good, nothi
good to them. He has undertaken the whole
covenant—what was to be done in them, as
for them—to work out, to apply, and to secur
salvation. It is his unchangeable purpose,

from him, but that all should keep them near to himself. He says he will be with them: they, therefore, expect his presence; and if their afflictions be very great, they may on good grounds wait for his time of deliverance. And as his word cannot be broken, their trust in it will be confirmed, and their hearts will be established in waiting upon the Lord. If their afflictions continue long, he is with them all the time, making them sensible of their own weakness, and putting forth his promised strength, both that they may endure, and may also persevere in enduring: thus he improves their patience. And because they have still a carnal nature, which cannot bear the cross, God therefore keeps it upon them, in order to crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts, that as they die unto sin, they may live unto righteousness. Such is the declared purpose of God in afflicting his children; he would hereby cherish these graces in them; by which communion with them is kept up; and as these grow, communion with them will grow in proportion. Faith will look more at the truth, and live more upon the faithfulness of God. Patience will depend more on his arm, and the less happiness the believer can find in the creature, he will seek and will find the more in his God. The mortifying of the old man will, of course, make the new man more alive: for as the power of the cross of Christ is laid upon the former, the power of the life of Christ will be experienced in the latter.

But such is the goodness of God to his children under the cross, that he has given them several very particular and express promises, in order to strengthen

me in the hour of temptation. O my God! make the word, in which thou hast caused me to put my trust, more precious to my soul. Open still more to me the fulness of it, and put me into happier possession of its promised blessings. I praise thee, I worship thee, for revealing this promise by thy Spirit, and for applying it by his grace with comfort to my heart. I now set to my seal that it is true. It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation. Glory be to thee that I accept it, and enjoy the good promised in it. O Father of mercies, what am I that I should be made one of thy people, and should have thee for my God! This love surpasseth knowledge. O help me to understand more; give me to find more of thy covenant love. Make my heart one with thee. Lead me in thine own way, that I may fear thee for ever. And when temptations come, such as I have been in, grant that they may bring me nearer to thee, and may be the means of my making much use of what thou hast provided for me in thy Son's fulness. O let thy good Spirit abide with me to establish my faith in thine everlasting covenant, that I may believe thou wilt never turn from me to do me good. Merciful God, grant me this grace in every hour of need. Thou hast given me thy word for it, and therein thou hast enabled me to put my trust. On thy faithful promise I would depend, and on nothing in myself. Thou hast showed me something of my heart, and I feel it is revolting, and ready always to rebel against God; but thou hast undertaken to put thy fear into it, that it shall not depart from thee: therefore, into thy faithful hands I commit it. Keep me, my God, by

thy mighty power, through faith unto salvation. Amen, amen.

Happy trials! which have so good an issue, and bring forth such peaceful fruits. My brethren, count it all joy, when ye fall into divers temptations, if they lead to the exercise of grace, and occasion fervent effectual prayer. The believer thus tried, learns by practice the necessity of being at peace with God, and of maintaining it in order to walk with God. He is put upon studying the nature of this peace. He reads and meditates upon the revealed account of it. He sees it as a perfect unchangeable peace, secured to him by the everlasting covenant of the blessed Trinity, who have engaged to save him from all his sins and miseries, and never to turn away from doing him good. To this he trusts. He commits himself to the care of this covenant God; and he finds the promise true. In temptation, he believes and is delivered. In his warfare, out of weakness he is made strong. He fights the good fight of faith, and he conquers all his enemies. He learns from trials to trust with great confidence. He not only maintains, but also improves peace with God. He depends upon what God has promised to them who walk with him, and the promise is made good; and he learns to go on more comfortably, and daily walks closer with his heavenly Father.

The enemy looks on him with malice. He envies his state. He once knew the heaven of communion with God, but he was lifted up with pride, and fell. It stirs up every infernal temper in him to see the happy believer, who had fallen like him, restored to what he never can expect. Hence, either as a sly

now; for I am a partaker of the things which accompany salvation. I am making use of them—I find their reality—I enjoy their sweetness,—blessing, and thanks, and praise without ceasing, be unto thee, my adorable God and Saviour.

Is it not, O my soul, thy fervent prayer, that thou mayest live in holy friendship with Jesus? Why then dost thou fear his cross, which is his appointed way and means of improving thine intimacy with him, and likeness to him? O study the discovery of his love in the Scriptures; and take particular notice of the promises which he has made to his suffering brethren. Read, mark them, mix faith with them, that they may be fulfilled in thine experience. Remember, thou canst not suffer but by his will, to which he expects submission: he sends the cross to teach thee this lesson. It cannot hurt thee if thou dost not quarrel with it: but if thy will be resigned to his, herein thou wilt have fellowship with him; and thou wilt have reason constantly to be praying to him—"Not my will, Lord, but thine be done."

Consider, for the improvement of this fellowship, that thy Lord himself was exercised with the cross. He has gone before thee, bearing it. He has taken the curse and wrath out of it, and has sanctified it to all his followers. In faith they must take it up, and in patience carry it, or they will not come to the kingdom. Certainly, then, their crucified Lord will be with them; yea, he has promised—"I will be with thee in trouble." Seek his presence, O my soul, under the cross—wait for communion with him—he has said he will be with thee: expect, there-

fore, the light of his countenance, which is better than life. Do not fear the cross, since it is to bring thee such a blessing: it is to be the means of thy fellowship with Jesus, in his sensible support and heavenly comfort; take it up then. Suppose it removes all thine earthly joy: let that go. The pain of its loss is not to be compared with the joy of thy spirit. Jesus will give thee pure holy joy; and, by his divine art, will extract it out of pain. He afflicts, that he may comfort. He takes away sensual, that he may give spiritual pleasure. He removes creature-love, that he may communicate more of his happy love. In mercy he chastises. He sees there is need to mortify sin. He sends the cross for this purpose, and blesses what he sends. It works like wholesome physic. But, oh! it is bitter, it is nauseous to the taste. Why do you chew it then? Swallow the pill. The benefit is not to be found in the mouth, but in the stomach. There it will purge bad humours. The sovereign Physician intends it should operate upon every evil temper which would hinder your blessed communion with him, and should be the means of exercising those graces by which that communion is maintained and may be improved.

Such is the cross of Christ;—taken up in faith, and carried in patience, it promotes daily fellowship with him, which is the greatest blessing upon earth. There is no greater in heaven: only they enjoy it by sense, and we by faith. But we have the same fellowship with them in Jesus, and the same communion with them in the graces of his salvation. And for these he makes way by his cross. He deadens the soul to the life of sense, that it may feel

sire of the flesh, is not subject to the law of God; and although there is no condemnation for them that believe and are baptized, yet the apostle doth confess that concupiscence and lust hath of itself the nature of sin." And in the 15th Art. *Of Christ alone without sin*, they say, "that all we, the rest, although baptized and born again in Christ, yet offend in many things; and if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."

The compilers of our Articles were holy men, and taught of God. They spake his mind and will according to the oracles of truth. And it will be a great comfort to a poor soldier, wearied with fighting against those lusts which war against the soul, to find that the best Christians, in every age, have been engaged in the same holy war. This will mightily encourage him to take to him the whole armour of God, that he may be able to withstand in the evil day; and having done all, to stand.

Attend then, O my soul, to the law and to the testimony. Pray for the Spirit of wisdom and revelation. Desire grace to submit to the truth of God, that whatever he teaches plainly and expressly in his word, thou mayest believe it, and abide by it. Read and pray till thou art satisfied, and the conviction of thy mind influence thy heart and walk. Art thou to carry the inward cross all the way to heaven? Is there no discharge in this war—no truce to be made—not even a cessation of arms? But art thou to be fighting on the good fight of faith, till the Captain of thy salvation take thee out of the field of battle? O hard service! To be night and day—at home and abroad—in the closet and in the church—at

be able to bear all things, and my daily cross will keep me in daily communion with thee, to my profit and to thine eternal praise. Amen.

Thus the cross of Christ is sanctified, and keeps up communion with him in the blessings of his salvation. So it does with the Father in his love. In the covenant, his name is expressive of his office. He is a Father who has every holy affection and feeling of love. He embraces, in the bowels of the tenderest parent, all his family—Christ the head, and all the members of his body, the church. With one undivided love his heart is set upon Christ and them, and with the same bountiful hand he blesses him and them. What Christ is, they shall be. In this most gracious relation he stands to the whole household of faith. He is their Father, who loves and accepts them; pardons, justifies, sanctifies, and blesses them with all spiritual and eternal blessings in Christ Jesus.

It is hard to believe this under the cross. To cleave to him in love, as our Father, when his hand is lifted up to smite, yea, when we smart under his rod, then to see love in his heart, and love guiding his hand, is faith very triumphant. We are apt to look upon our sufferings as coming from the wrath of God. We think he must be displeased, or else he would not delight to put us to pain: upon this account we are not reconciled to the cross, but would shake it off if we could. The Scriptures give us a different view of this matter, and represent God in a more amiable light, even in the severest chastisement of his children. He is their Father, and they are his sons. This relation cannot subsist without

all sin, and who had fellowship with the Father and with the Son, and who proved the truth of this by their walking in the light: he puts himself among them, and declares, "If we say that we have no sin now, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." 'If WE say:' he saith not 'if *thou* say,' as if he spake of some particular person—nor 'if *ye* say,' as if he intended ordinary Christians alone—but 'if WE, apostles or whatever we be, say so; if any of us, if I, for instance, should think I had no sin now, who am a saint of a hundred years old; because I was a great favourite of the Lord Christ, and have been a great sufferer for him; or because I have lived blameless before men, and have been a witness for the truth in my writings, and am ready to seal it with my blood: if, upon account of any thing done by me or in me, of any real excellency or attainment, I should fancy myself in a state of sinless perfection, the Holy Ghost charges me with self-deceit—a dreadful delusion! arising from the pride of my heart, and its rebellion against God, and discovering the most gross ignorance of God's righteousness in the holy law, and of Christ's righteousness in the glorious gospel: but if I was to say, as well as to think it; if I should tell any body, Now I have no sin, I am perfect—now, at this time, I have received perfect purity of heart; for ever since I received it, I have had nothing stirring in me for one year, for two, twenty, forty years, but love, pure love to God—God is in all my thoughts, and nothing but God—I do his will in earth, as it is done in heaven;—if I should say so, I should tell a great lie: for I should deceive myself, and the truth would not be in me.'

Are these indeed the very words of the apostle: "If we say that we have no sin now, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us?" Can no other sense be fairly put upon them, but that the holy John had sin in him at every given moment of his life? Is this the plain literal meaning of the passage? As it certainly is, observe then, O my soul, the decisive evidence given here by the Holy Ghost concerning the inward cross. Pray for his teaching, that thou mayest understand; and pray for his grace, that thou mayest profit from this scripture. Here is his infallible record concerning St. John and all highly-favoured believers: he asserts, that there was no time of their lives in which they were free from indwelling sin; God forbid, then, that I should think I have no sin. He avers, that if they should say they had none, they were deceived; and that if they should stand to it, as Popish mystics and Protestant perfectionists do, the Searcher of hearts declares that they lie, and do not the truth—the truth is not in them; for the father of lies has flattered them, and drawn them into self-idolatry, with a wicked design to corrupt their minds from the simplicity that is in Christ. Beware, O my soul, of this deceit! the Holy Ghost has warned thee of it. He foresaw how the first sin would break out in after-times, and pride would persuade men that they were perfect in the flesh: he therefore so guarded this scripture that none can mistake it, but such as turn away their ears from the truth. He puts all the words in the present tense, lest any should think he was speaking of time past, or of what men were before the blood of Christ had cleansed them. "*If* we NOW SAY"—we, who now

have fellowship with the blessed Trinity, and are walking in the light of their countenance—say, that we now have no sin, nor had none formerly; he is not speaking of that: if he was, he would certainly have used the past tense; but he uses the present, "NOW HAVE NO SIN," so as not to want the cleansing blood of Jesus this moment as much as ever—if we have any such thoughts, we now deceive ourselves, and the truth is not now in us. How forcible and strong is this testimony from the mouth of John! and the sense, as well as the grammar, shows that he is speaking of believers, and that there is sin in them: for throughout the chapter he treats of the very same persons, and describes, not what they were before, but what they are since they received the grace of God. They were cleansed from all sin by the blood of the Lamb; were admitted into communion with the Father and the Son by the Spirit; and they enjoyed this communion, walking in the light, as God is in the light. These are the persons here mentioned, of whom God says they had sin still in them; indwelling sin, the fault and corruption of nature, still remained in them: and if they fancied it did not, they would be sadly deceived—they would entirely mistake the covenant of grace, which was to bring sinners, sensible of their wants and miseries, to live out of themselves upon the fulness of the God-man—they would forget their own character, under which alone they can be saved, salvation being only for sinners—they would fall into the crime of the devil, by pride exalting themselves against the person and work of the incarnate God—and they would quite pervert the law and the gospel: for, in order to main-

afflicts thee; but it is in order to thy keeping up communion with him under the cross; and he knows it is the best means of keeping it up, and of promoting it. O seek, then, by faith, for the promised fruit. Expect in patience the rich harvest. And that thou mayest quietly submit to the Father's will in purging thee, as a branch, observe how exactly the apostle Paul agrees with his blessed Master: "Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh who corrected us, and we gave them reverence; shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily, for a few days, corrected us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be made partakers of his holiness." There is a reverence due to earthly parents, and children are required to submit to their correction; although herein they often consult their own will and pleasure more than their children's profit. And is not greatest reverence due to the Father of our spirits, and shall we not submit to his corrections? especially since his design in them is to promote the greatest dignity and highest happiness of his children, even to make them partakers of his holiness: for, to partake is not only to give them a title to, but also to give them possession of, to communicate, to have fellowship with him, to share with him in his holiness. Holiness is the Father's image in his children, by which he makes them like him, and capable of enjoying him. He chose them in Christ before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy. He chose them in Christ, and made Christ their sanctification. In him they partake, as branches in the vine, of his holy nature. They are one with him in

under this burden, from whence they derived strength to bear it, and had comfort under it. Hear the man after God's own heart, crying out, "Mine iniquities are gone over my head as a heavy burden: they are too heavy for me." David had a heavy load: he was ready to sink, and he could not cast it off. He could not go into his closet, or to the house of God; he could not sit upon his throne, or go in and out before his family, but this grievous cross so bowed him down greatly, that he went mourning all the day long. The burden of it was intolerable, and would have crushed him under it, if he had not learned how to cast it on the Lord—"Make haste," says he, "to help me, O Lord God of my salvation." Here he found relief. The prayer of faith was heard, and God was the strength of his salvation.

Under the same burden, a New Testament saint went groaning all his days. He had a hard conflict between the flesh and the spirit, and he has left the account of it upon record. Blessed be God for the seventh chapter of the Romans. We there read of the inward cross, with which all the children of God are exercised. In the very same Paul there was delight in the law of God after the inward man; but he found another law in his members, rebelling against the law of God,—the flesh, in which dwelleth no good thing, never ceased to assault the spirit with its vile thoughts, legal workings, and rebellious inclinations—when he had a will to do good, he could not do it so perfectly as he desired—his best moments were never free from the inroads of indwelling sin: therefore, in the bitterness of his soul, he cried out, "O wretched man that I am!" O!—that sigh came

from the bottom of his heart. I know what he felt —he groaned, being burdened: weary and tired with this continual conflict, he looked out for deliverance —"Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" He saw by faith his almighty Saviour, and in him expected everlasting victory—"I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." He rested upon Christ in the battle, and through him waited for deliverance, knowing that one day he should be made more than conqueror.

Well then, O my soul, here is comfort. If the corruption of nature be thy cross, so it was to David, and so it was to Paul. Thy case is not singular. It is common to every soldier who is fighting under the banner of Christ. This cross is unavoidable, because it is in thy bosom. It is thine inmost self, thy whole nature, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts. Thou hast not an atom of thy body, nor the least motion or stirring of any faculty in thy soul, but sin is in it; and therefore it is capable of being a plague to the new man. The Holy Ghost speaks thus of the inward warfare: "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." These words are addressed to the Galatians, who were believers, and called into the liberty of the gospel, but by false teaching they were under a great temptation. They had begun in the spirit, but they thought of being perfected in the flesh. They set out with salvation by faith, but expected salvation at last by works. Among other

arguments to convince them of their mistake, here is one unanswerable, namely, No works of ours, but such as are perfect, can save a sinner; no works of ours are perfect, therefore they cannot save a sinner. And that none of them are perfect is certain, because in every one of them there is something of the flesh, of corrupt nature, as well as something of the spirit and of spiritual nature. These two are contrary as life and death, and they are always in action, every moment the one lusting against the other: so that no believer can do the things which he would, so perfectly as the holy law requires.

How grievous must this inward cross be to a real believer! For it consists in the opposition which he finds within him to God and to the things of God. The flesh ever lusteth against the Spirit, and the old man against the new. There is a continual war between these contrary powers. The flesh is a complete body of sin, armed with every member and instrument of rebellion that can resist the motions and actions of the new man. There is darkness in the understanding, always clouding the light of the glorious gospel, and therefore we know but in part. The will of the flesh always opposes the holy will of God. There is enmity in the heart, working against the love of God and of his will. There is pride, to weaken humility—anger, to oppose meekness—the carnal mind, to fight against spiritual-mindedness. When the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak. When you draw near to God in prayer, the imagination will not be confined: it will wander after a thousand vain objects. When you are hearing the word, it will disturb your attention with its unaccountable excur-

sions. It is so sportive and flighty, that you cannot keep it within any bounds. Is it not so, O my soul? Art thou not sensible of this heavy cross? Dost thou not find something in thee always resisting and weakening the exercise of thy graces? and is not this the great plague of thy life? Can there be a greater, than to carry about with thee a sinful nature, daily trying to hinder thee in thy holy walk and happy communion with God? O how much does it concern thee, then, to be well skilled in bearing this cross, and in behaving under it as a good soldier of Christ Jesus! And to this end, the principles before laid down are absolutely necessary. Without them thou canst not rightly understand the nature of indwelling sin, and canst not possibly gain victory over it. Only the doctrines of grace, received into thy heart, can enable thee to walk with God under this cross. Call to mind, then, what was agreed upon in the covenant of the Trinity, and was fulfilled in the person and work of Emmanuel, for thy peace with the Father, and for thy returning to him in love, and has been applied to thee by the Holy Spirit, who has given thee faith in Jesus, and has manifested the love of the Father in him: thou art therefore now one with thy covenant Head—in him complete and perfect, although thou art in thyself still a sinner. Thou hast a body of sin, through the lusting of which thou art not able to keep the holy law, according to its full demands, in any one instance. But thou art before the Father, what thy surety is. He sees thee in him, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; accepted as he is, beloved *with the same* love, looked upon with the same

joy, and blessed with all spiritual blessings in him. Thy surety lived for thee: thou hast the righteousness of God for thy justification. Thy surety died for thee: in him thou art as truly dead unto sin as Christ himself is. Thy surety rose again, and took possession of spiritual and eternal life for thee. He was delivered for thine offences, and raised again for thy justification. Thou shalt reign with him, as certainly as he has now the crown upon his own head. Such is the perfect salvation which is for thee, although thou art still the subject of sin: for thy pardon is without exception or reverse—all trespasses are freely forgiven. Thy justification to life is absolute: for it is God himself that justifieth. He chose thee in Jesus, that thou shouldst be holy and without blame before him; and so thou art. As a member in his body, thou art without blemish. Here is thy relief under the inward cross. The Father chose thee in his Son, looks upon thee in him, and deals with thee according to covenant love: there is therefore now no condemnation to thee, who art in Christ Jesus. With the sweet sense of this upon thy conscience, persuaded that God is at peace with thee, take up the inward cross. In this delightful view see the curse removed. Thou hast no reason to fear wrath, or death, or hell. Victory over all sins and enemies is certain. Daily, eternal victory is promised. In this faith follow the noble army who carried this cross to their graves. Fight as they did, looking unto Jesus. Sin is in thee: it was in them; but they looked upon it as a vanquished foe, slain and put to death when Jesus died for sin once. Likewise reckon thou also thyself to be in

him dead unto sin—freed from the condemning sentence of the law—freed from the dreadful stroke of justice by his death—freed as truly as he is—and therefore thou art no more liable than he is to be condemned and punished. And for the strengthening of this faith, seek for fellowship with him in his death. It is thy privilege, as thou art planted in the likeness of his death, to derive power and efficacy from it, daily to put sin to death. The more steadfastly thou believest that thou art one with him in his death, the more wilt thou find thy sinful nature crucified with him. Communion is always according to the faith of union with Christ. The strongest faith must have the strongest hold of him, and thereby draw the most virtue from him. It is true, as our faith increases we become more spiritual; and we see corruption more, as we see motes in the sun-beams. The senses of the new man, by exercise, gain a quicker perception of sin—we become all over tender as the eye—jealous of the motions, yea, of the appearance of evil. This is real growth. Sin is more felt, in order that the power of Jesus may be put forth to make us hate it, resist it, and overcome it more. As believers are more sensible of their sinfulness in the first Adam, so they grow up into the second Adam, the Lord from heaven; they bear the cross of the corruption of the first, which leads them to constant fellowship with the second—in his death, for the pardon of their corruption—in the power of his death, to mortify sin, that it may not have dominion over them.

Corruption is in thee, and it will strive for dominion. Thy sins will sometimes fiercely assault.

Their allies, the world and the devil, will join them with stratagems and force: when the battle is hot, and thou art weak, then it behooves thee to live by faith upon Jesus as thy surety, now acting for thee in heaven, as he acted for thee upon earth. He has gone up, as thy High Priest, to carry thy name within the veil. He bears it upon the ephod on his shoulders, and upon the breast-plate on his heart: his power and his love are engaged for thee, now he is in glory. He stands in the presence of God, as thy representative. The Father sees thee in him; and thou art in his sight what thy forerunner is. As he stands there, so dost thou stand—righteous as he is righteous—holy as he is holy—beloved as he is beloved—and shalt be blessed as he is blessed. View, by faith, thy nature in him, exalted and glorified, and for the joy set before thee in him take up thy cross. It is a heavy burden—it is a hard warfare. True: but consider, who shall lay any thing to thy charge for indwelling sin? It is God that justifieth thee from it. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died; yea, rather, that has risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for thee. He appears in the presence of God for thee, as thine intercessor. He is always in court to represent thy person, and to carry thy cause, especially as to what concerns sin: "If any of us sin," says the beloved disciple, "we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins:" in this office he is skilful, and *faithful*, and compassionate. He has thine interest *at heart*; thy safety, thy comfort, under this cross,

runs: "Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am." What is your burden? I am present to give strength to bear it. What is your grief? Here are my comforts. Do your tribulations abound? Here are my consolations abounding also. Here I am—ask what you will, believing, and it shall be done unto you. O what times of refreshing are these! The Holy Ghost sensibly comforts the afflicted. When they draw nigh to God, he is present to make their hearts joyful. He dispels their darkness with the light of his countenance, and turns their mourning into joy. And thus they have not only communion with God in prayer, but also such communications of his heavenly love, that they can often say, It is good for us that we have been in trouble.

In times of trouble, the word also is generally sweet. All people in distress look out for some comfort: and the Holy Spirit directs believers to the Scriptures. "Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope." The afflicted feel their want of patience and comfort, which puts them upon careful hearing and reading of the good word of God. They want to know what it says of their case; and when they meet a suitable promise, then they have a ground of hope. Their present trials require them to seek for something more than the truth of the promise. This being credited, they therefore expect the promised blessing. When the famine was in Canaan, Jacob and his family could not have been kept alive by

believing that there was corn in Egypt: they must either fetch it or die. Trouble calls for the experience of the promised blessings, and when they are received at such a time, they are sweet indeed. They feel as ease does after pain. When the Holy Spirit applies the comfort, the promise by which he applies it is precious. It is like a reviving cordial to a fainting heart. "O how sweet are thy words unto my taste, yea, sweeter than honey unto my mouth!" Honey is sweet, but the word is sweeter. When, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, the afflicted believer enjoys the good of the promise, then he can say—Now I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me: let, I pray thee, thy merciful kindness be for my comfort, according to thy word unto thy servant.

Sweet is the comfort which the afflicted receive from God the Comforter under the cross; not only in suffering, but also after it. Afterward also "it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness." He who carries the cross of Christ, does not labour in vain, and spend his strength for nought; but he is bearing forth good seed. If he sow it in tears, yet he shall reap in joy. The Lord looks at the fruit, and intends to bring forth much of it by the cross: we are apt to look at the suffering and to forget the fruit. He has the end in view in the use of all means; and the Holy Spirit has revealed this clearly, that we might depend upon him for receiving the proper fruit of affliction. The Lord says, he led his people through the great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery flying serpents and scorpions, and

drought; that he might humble them, and that he might prove them, to do them good at the latter end. He intended to do them good. This was first in his heart. Then the way in which he would do it: he would lead them through many afflictions, by which they should find, at the latter end, how good God was to them. The promise of this was their encouragement to bear the cross, till they reaped the fruit. In like manner the Lord says to the afflicted Jews, "I know the thoughts that I think towards you, saith the Lord; thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end"—such an end as you would wish, and, having my promise, such as you may safely hope for. My thoughts indeed are not as your thoughts: you think I have cast you off, and that your present cross is to crush you;—no, I mean to do you good by it; and so the end will prove: wait a little in faith, and all will come to a happy issue.

Are these scriptures the truth of God? Has the eternal Spirit promised in them, that although the bearing of the cross be very painful, yet it is very profitable? Will he afterwards cause them to bring forth much fruit, who have been exercised with it? Art thou then waiting, O my soul, under all thy troubles, for the promised end? Dost thou expect it, and in patience tarry the Lord's leisure? Canst thou look back, and see how merciful the dealings of thy God have been—how gracious his rod—how loving his correction? Canst thou look forward under every cross, persuaded that God will do thee good at the latter end?—that he will cause many peaceable fruits to grow upon this seemingly

barren tree? Yea, that these light afflictions, which are but for a moment, shall work for thee an eternal weight of glory, far more excellent than can be conceived? O God the Holy Ghost, I do believe it: I would not doubt of the truth of the promise in thy word, nor of the truth of thy grace in my heart. I therefore beseech thee, O thou Spirit Jehovah, to enable me to keep up communion with thee in all my trials, that I may bring forth those peaceable fruits of righteousness. Thou art the Giver of every grace. I acknowledge thee to be the Author of my spiritual life: I was dead in trespasses and sins, and thou hast quickened me. It is of thy mere gift that I have any faith, and that upon the trial it was found to be true faith: I bless thee for this grace, and humbly pray for the continuance and for the increase of it. Meet me in the use of all means, and enable me to grow in faith, rooted and grounded in Christ Jesus, that I may also grow in love to his Father and to my Father. O thou divine Revealer of his heavenly love, shed it abroad more abundantly in my heart, that I may learn more resignation to his will, more subjection to his authority, and more submission to his rod. I acknowledge thee, O holy-making Spirit, to be the teacher of patience, and what I have learned was thy revelation. It was in thy strength that I was enabled to go on with any quietness bearing my cross. Thy grace made me willing, and nothing else can keep me willing, to have the flesh crucified with its affections and lusts. O God, put forth thine almighty power, and enable me to part with every thing which would hinder my fellowship with the Father and Son. I desire so to walk this day, as

to have growing fellowship with the Eternal Three, and I desire it through thine influence. O God the Holy Ghost, carry on thy work. Exalt and purify my faith and patience, and every grace: if it be thy will to do this under the cross, O make me willing and able to bear it. Let every cross bring forth richer and riper fruit, until thou give me an exceeding great and eternal harvest of glory. I ask this in the name of Jesus, and I expect an answer of grace through the Father's love in him, to whom with thee, O blessed Spirit, three persons in one Godhead, be equal glory, worship, and praise, now and for ever. Amen.

Meditate, O my soul, with seriousness, upon this great subject. Study the Scripture account of the cross. The knowledge of it enters into the very essence of the peace and comfort of thy walk. Thou canst not run away from the cross; thou canst not cast it off: remember, if thou wilt be Christ's disciple, thou must take it up daily, and follow him. If it be very heavy and very grievous, yet it will not hinder thee from following him. He carried the heaviest part for thee—he endured the curse and punishment due to thy sins—he left no wrath for thee to suffer. Blessed be his love, the cross has no curse in it now—thy sufferings are all sent from love—and his love will help thee to bear them, and to profit by them: for he has promised to bless and sanctify them to his people. And he makes them a blessing indeed. Never, on this side of heaven, does he give them such near and happy communion with himself, as under the cross. O read, then, and study what is revealed in Scripture concerning it.

Go over it again and again. Learn well, and inwardly digest, the doctrine of the cross of Christ; the necessity, the benefit, the blessings of it. Meditate and feed upon the sweet promises relating to it: mix faith with them, that they may nourish and strengthen thee in time of need. But never forget, that thy cross, be it what it will, is appointed for thee in covenant love. It is the portion allotted thee by thy heavenly Father; decreed, in weight and measure, to an atom: thou shalt not bear it one moment longer than he has determined; and many precious fruits it shall produce. Thou wilt find suffering times growing times—growth in faith and patience, in mortification to sin, and in fellowship with the ever-blessed Trinity. The Author of thy faith puts it to the trial: it comes out of the lion's den unhurt; it comes out of the fiery furnace refined. God is glorified hereby, and thou art strengthened. He sends the cross to teach thee patience, and he continues it for the exercise and for the improvement of the same grace. He intends, by his chastening, to crucify the flesh, and to mortify thy members which are upon the earth. In love he takes away sensual, that he may give thee spiritual joys. He does not hate thee, but love guides every stroke of his chastening. He is only weakening thine attachment to earthly things, that he may increase thy communion with Father, Son, and Spirit. O what blessings are these! Meditate, O my soul, much and often upon them. Pray for the experience of them in time of need; and be assured, with all these helps, the cross will be exercised hard enough for thy patience. Thou canst

sixth of the Romans, and pray for the Spirit of revelation to open it to thee. There thou wilt discover the true way to mortify sin. It is by believing, that thou art planted together with Christ in his death: from thence only thy pardon flows, from thence thy daily victory is received, and from thence thy eternal victory will be perfected. Fight on; soon thou shalt be what Christ now is. The member shall be perfectly like the Head. O glorious prospect! Thou shalt be with him, and like him—spotless and fair as Jesus, righteous and holy, happy in body and soul. Thou shalt see him as he is, and awaking after his likeness, thou shalt be satisfied with it. Take up thy cross for the joy here set before thee. Bear it in faith. It will be light and easy to thy pardoned conscience; yea, the carrying of it in patience will bring forth many peaceable fruits of righteousness: among the rest, there is one which in the sight of God is of great price, and which is daily improved by the inward cross; namely,

Humility, which consists in the right knowledge of ourselves, not only of what we have been, but also of what we now are. The best and holiest man upon the earth, has a corrupt fallen nature: he has flesh still, which is always lusting against the Spirit. While he is alive to God he feels it. He is sensible of the inward conflict. Dead men indeed feel nothing. A dead corpse has no sense of the worms which are eating it up. He that has these lusts in him, and warring against his soul, and yet does not feel them, cannot be spiritually alive. A natural man has no sense of them; because they are in him *as worms in a dead* body: just so it is with the per-

fectionist. But so soon, and so long, as he lives to God, he will perceive them. If he be in happy communion with God, indwelling sin is present to interrupt the enjoyment. If he exercise any grace, this besetting sin tries to weaken its actings. If it be set about any duty, it will hinder him from doing it so perfectly as God requires, and as he could wish. The abiding sense of these truths will keep down pride. The believer will see nothing of his own to trust in; no faith, or hope, or love; no faithfulness to grace, no holy obedience: all is stained and polluted. He is forced to cry out of his best duties—Unclean, unclean! In this school the disciple learns to walk humbly with his God. The more he knows of himself, the more humble he becomes. And he grows in this heavenly grace, the more he is acquainted with the mercy of God in Jesus. This, learned by divine teaching, keeps the believer meek and lowly in his own eyes. Nothing softens and melts the soul into holy tenderness like the sense of God's mercy. A man who feels the plague of his own heart, is never truly humbled until he be pardoned. But when he is justified from all things in Christ, in him a partaker of all spiritual blessings in earth and heaven; when he sees all his salvation of grace, of free sovereign grace, flowing from the absolute favour of electing love, and bestowed upon him, as unworthy an object as ever did or ever can partake of it, then he becomes truly broken-hearted. These truths, taught of God, bring every high thought into subjection to Christ Jesus. The soul bows before him, lies low at his feet; prostrates itself before the throne of his grace, and desires to be kept

sire of the flesh, is not subject to the law of God; and although there is no condemnation for them that believe and are baptized, yet the apostle doth confess that concupiscence and lust hath of itself the nature of sin." And in the 15th Art. *Of Christ alone without sin*, they say, "that all we, the rest, although baptized and born again in Christ, yet offend in many things; and if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."

The compilers of our Articles were holy men, and taught of God. They spake his mind and will according to the oracles of truth. And it will be a great comfort to a poor soldier, wearied with fighting against those lusts which war against the soul, to find that the best Christians, in every age, have been engaged in the same holy war. This will mightily encourage him to take to him the whole armour of God, that he may be able to withstand in the evil day; and having done all, to stand.

Attend then, O my soul, to the law and to the testimony. Pray for the Spirit of wisdom and revelation. Desire grace to submit to the truth of God, that whatever he teaches plainly and expressly in his word, thou mayest believe it, and abide by it. Read and pray till thou art satisfied, and the conviction of thy mind influence thy heart and walk. Art thou to carry the inward cross all the way to heaven? Is there no discharge in this war—no truce to be made—not even a cessation of arms? But art thou to be fighting on the good fight of faith, till the Captain of thy salvation take thee out of the field of battle? O hard service! To be night and day—at home and abroad—in the closet and in the church—at

God. This is true humility. The more they are humbled, the more they receive out of the fulness of Jesus; for he giveth more grace—more, to produce nearer fellowship with him in his death, whereby sin will be more dead; and in his resurrection, whereby the soul will be more alive to God. So that the humblest believer is the nearest to God, and is the safest, happiest, and holiest of all the men upon earth, because he has most fellowship with God. He dwells in God, and God in him. Meditate, O my soul, upon this use of this cross. Is sin in thee? Dost thou feel it, and art thou fighting against it? And does not this humble thee? Art thou freely forgiven all trespasses, indwelling sin among the rest? Dost thou know that thou art a saved sinner—a brand plucked out of hell? And does not this humble thee? I see reason enough to be humbled, but I feel pride in me lusting against humility. O my precious Jesus, humble me under thy mighty hand. To thee I look for all my salvation. Lord, save me from pride. Thou hast made me willing to be taught of thee to be meek and lowly, and I come to thee, praying that the disciple may be as his Master. O let me drink deep into thy Spirit. In every day's warfare against my corruptions, enable me to renounce myself, that I may find thou art carrying both me and my cross. Keep me humbled at thy feet, that thou mayest exalt me in due time. I pray to thee, my precious Saviour, for this grace, to mine eternal humbling, and to thine eternal exaltation. In life and death, and for evermore, I hope to glory only in the Lord, and to triumph in the God of my salvation.

Thus the believer learns to walk humbly under the inward cross. He is brought to trust all in the Saviour's hand. Daily he discovers more of the ruins of the fall, which lead him to fresh discoveries of the perfect salvation in Jesus. If he attend to what is passing in his own breast, he finds his need of a Saviour every moment, and for every thing: by which means he grows in grace, and in the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord. He learns to put no confidence in the flesh; but to rejoice only in his completeness in Jesus, from whom all his comforts and victories are received. Thus, while self is laid low, the Saviour is exalted, and his perfect work is more depended on. The believer, by hope and love, obtains more delightful communion with his God. Indwelling sin is his cross: but he bears it, looking unto Jesus; from whom he receives strength to go on, yea, to run the race set before him. By faith he sees in Jesus the corruption of his nature condemned and dead in law: he beholds himself freed from this, as well as from his other sins. Guilt is the most galling part of this cross; but when guilt is thus removed from the conscience, then the cross grows light. When taken up in faith, and carried in love to the Almighty Saviour, then it does not stop the believer in his fellowship with Jesus, or in his happy walk with him. Glory be to thee, my Lord, of this I have some experience. Yes, precious Jesus, I know the infinite value of that sacrifice which put away sin. I bless thee for that offering which perfects for ever. Interested in it, I would not distrust my completeness *in thee. Through* thy holy nature, I expect to be

renewed after thy likeness. The fountain for cleansing from the filth of sin stands open: in it I daily wash my spotted soul. In thy divine righteousness, I see the law and justice of the Father infinitely honoured by justifying me, and dealing with me as perfectly righteous. Complete in thee I am. In thy work finished upon earth I am perfect, and am represented as such by thee in heaven. I believe thou appearest there as my divine Intercessor, bearing my name upon thy shoulders, and upon thy breast, with a glory beyond all the precious stones in the world. O my blessed Jesus, increase this faith. Lead me from faith to faith, that, while I am travelling heavenwards, mine eye and my heart may be more simply fixed upon thee. Come, thou glorifier of the Saviour, and discover to me more of the sinfulness of sin, and of my need of his salvation. Holy Spirit, teach me in the deepest sense of indwelling sin, to trust wholly to the offering of the body of Jesus. O lead me to his cross, there to see all my sins nailed, crucified with him, dead in his death, buried in his grave: in this faith strengthen me mightily to resist and to conquer my corruptions. Enable me to experience the power of his cross, that I may feel sin weakened in the love and in the practice of it. Almighty Spirit, in my daily warfare I find no strength less than thine can make me conqueror: and therein thou hast caused me to put my trust. Awake, awake; put on strength, O arm of the Lord: awake as in the ancient days, in the generations of old. Art thou not it that cut the pride of nature to pieces, and wounded the old dragon? O my God, magnify thine arm in subduing every

have fellowship with the blessed Trinity, and as walking in the light of their countenance—say, that we now have no sin, nor had none formerly; he is not speaking of that: if he was, he would certainly have used the past tense; but he uses the present "NOW HAVE NO SIN," so as not to want the cleansing blood of Jesus this moment as much as ever—if we have any such thoughts, we now deceive ourselves and the truth is not now in us. How forcible and strong is this testimony from the mouth of John: and the sense, as well as the grammar, shows that he is speaking of believers, and that there is sin in them: for throughout the chapter he treats of the very same persons, and describes, not what they were before, but what they are since they received the grace of God. They were cleansed from all sin by the blood of the Lamb; were admitted into communion with the Father and the Son by the Spirit; and they enjoyed this communion, walking in the light, as God is in the light. These are the persons here mentioned of whom God says they had sin still in them; indwelling sin, the fault and corruption of nature, still remained in them: and if they fancied it did not they would be sadly deceived—they would entirely mistake the covenant of grace, which was to bring sinners, sensible of their wants and miseries, to live out of themselves upon the fulness of the God-man—they would forget their own character, under which alone they can be saved, salvation being only for sinners—they would fall into the crime of the devil by pride exalting themselves against the person and work of the incarnate God—and they would quite pervert the law and the gospel: for, in order to main-

flesh and blood, but also against principalities and powers of earth and hell: he cannot discover their stratagems, nor overcome their assaults, but by being strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. His warfare is therefore to be carried on entirely by faith. The principles before laid down must be brought into use. What the Spirit of God has discovered to him of his salvation in Jesus, is to be tried in every battle; and if it be maintained, it will be improved. If he hold fast the confidence of his faith, he will behave like a good soldier. If he always takes up arms in absolute dependence on the Divine General, to give him courage, to order him how to attack his enemies, to bestow strength upon him daily to resist them, then victory will be certain. Yea, he will be invincible, while he stands strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. He will meditate upon the principles which he had been taught of God, and will find peace in his own conscience, and joy in his heart, by bringing them into daily experience. His believing views of the warfare to which he is called, will be such as these:—

I am, through sovereign grace, called to fight under the banner of Jesus. He has not left me to fight as uncertainly, but he has conquered all mine enemies for me, and he has undertaken to conquer them all in me. It is true, I am weak; but my Redeemer is strong: the Lord of hosts is his name. He has saved me from my sins, from the shame and pain of them, from the wicked one, and the wicked world, from the curse of the law, and from the wrath of God. He has given me a divine righteousness for my justification, and in it I am accepted before

the throne: he has put it upon me for ornament and defence—it is a garment of salvation, which cannot be lost upon earth, and which will shine with never-fading beauty in heaven. The Father is perfectly reconciled, and loves me with a love that passes knowledge. I believe it. God is on my side: I need not fear what any enemy can do unto me. He has taken me into his protection. By his all-wise counsel I am guided; by his almighty arm I am defended. My battles are the Lord's. Indeed, mine enemies are many, and they are too cunning and too mighty for me. But why do they now fight against me? Is it not because God is my friend? They hate me, because he loves me. While I lived in friendship with them, and was at war with God, they were always trying to make me happy: but ever since I fled to Jesus for refuge, and sought redemption in his blood, they have taken up arms against me; and they have raged more furiously since I was enabled to believe in him. But I have no reason to fear their opposition. With them is an arm of flesh, but with me is the Lord my God to help me, and to fight my battles. I may therefore go to my daily warfare in faith, regarding the commands, waiting for the fulfilling of the promises of my God, and relying upon the provision which he has made for my present and for mine eternal victory.

Are thy meditations, O my soul, like these upon the Christian warfare? Examine thyself. If thou art at peace with God, thou must expect war. It is unavoidable. If it be in thy heart to please him who hath chosen thee to be a soldier, then all the *powers of wickedness* will be in arms. Night and

day, with never-ceasing rage, they will pursue thee. Deep-laid plans will be formed, and fierce assaults will be made against thy true happiness. They will be attempting, so long as thou art in the world, by some cunning or force, to draw thee from thy God. Thy life, from henceforth, is to be one continued battle. Thy victory depends every moment upon holding fast thy confidence in God; and therefore thou must bring the principles of the doctrine of Christ into exercise. Thou hast seen how necessary they are for every step of thy walk, and thou wilt find them equally necessary for every part of thy warfare. This is a leading truth: thine enemies are God's enemies. Once thou didst join with them, and wast on their side fighting against God, but he has saved thee from the guilt of thy rebellion. In free love he chose thee in his Son, and in sovereign mercy gave him for thee. The Son rejoiced to do his Father's will for thy salvation: he did it in his life; he suffered it in his death. The ever-glorious work is finished; and it is given thee on the behalf of Christ to believe. The Lord the Spirit has satisfied thy conscience, and has comforted thy heart with the knowledge of this perfect salvation. The Father is thy Father in Jesus—thine by his own free gift—thine by his own unchangeable purpose—and now thine by thy free choice. He has made thee willing in the day of his power to take him for thy God. He is perfectly reconciled unto thee in his Son: and should not this perfectly reconcile thee to him? His love to thee is wonderful in all its properties, in its rise and origin, and in its free and full communication of every covenant blessing. And

does not the belief of this engage thy heart in love to God? Dost thou not love him for his love to thee; and is it not thy daily prayer that thy love may abound yet more and more? Has not the sense of this peace and love been improved in thy daily walk with him? Hast thou not found the truth, and enjoyed the comfort of these graces in thine experience? O fear not then, since God is on thy side—fear not, O my soul, to go to war with any enemy, who would rob thee of the peace of God in thy conscience, or of the love of God in thy heart. This is the design of all those who fight against thee. They want to shake thy confidence in God, and so to draw thee from him. They know they cannot succeed while thou standest strong in the Lord, trusting to his being thy reconciled God and loving Father. O keep this trust in him, as the apple of thine eye—bind it continually to thy heart in love—and fight for it as for thy precious life. Be assured no enemies can prevail against thee, until they have first overcome thy faith: because, while thou makest God thy refuge and strength, his almighty arm will be thy defence. "Be not afraid," says he, "I am with thee, and I will keep thee by my power, through faith, unto salvation."

In this warfare, it is the chief business of the believer to have respect to the orders given him. He is entirely to depend on the Captain of his salvation. What has he said, O my soul, to encourage thee to go to battle without fear? Mind his description—it is the good fight of faith in which thou art engaged. By faith thou art to attack thy foes; by faith alone thou canst conquer them; and faith must have his

COMMANDS, or else it can have no lawful warrant to fight, and no just ground to expect victory. Indeed, if he had spoken nothing, there could have been no faith: for his word comes first—it is spoken—it is heard—and then faith comes by hearing. Look well then to his word. Study it carefully. If thou obey it aright, thou art absolutely safe in the hottest battle; and thy victory is as certain as if the crown was already upon thy head. These are his standing orders—"Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not afraid, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. Behold all they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded: they shall be as nothing, and they that strive with thee shall perish. Thou shalt seek them, and shalt not find them, even them that contended with thee: they that war against thee shall be as nothing, and as a thing of nought; for the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not, I will help thee. Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy Redeemer, the holy One of Israel." Are these indeed the words of God? Does he command poor worms, weak and defenceless, to go to war without fear? Does he encourage them to look up to his arm, promising to be on their side? Yes, the Lord of hosts fights for them. All their enemies are his, and therefore they may safely trust, and not be afraid. O my soul, read carefully, read again and again, mark and inwardly digest every word of this divine command; and in obedience to it expect his help. Face thine

emies, whoever they be, with holy boldness; for
od is with thee. He has undertaken to fight thy
ttles. Look at this scripture. Canst thou medi-
e on it, and yet be afraid? Of whom, or of what?
vile unbelieving fear! Beg of God to save thee
m it. Honour the Captain of thy salvation.
rust him. Doubt not but thou art as safe, obey-
g his orders and expecting his help, as almighty
wer can make thee. Observe the courage of one
thy fellow-soldiers—observe his victory: "When
cry unto thee, then shall mine enemies be turned
ck: this I know, for God is on my side. In God
ll I praise his word; in the Lord will I praise his
ord: in God have I put my trust, I will not be
raid what man can do unto me." The enemies of
avid came to swallow him up, but he encouraged
mself in the Lord his God. He attended to his
ders. He considered the word which was spoken
him, he depended upon it, and had reason to praise
od for his faithfulness; for God fulfilled it unto
m. There was in it a

PROMISE, as well as a command—Do this—and
will be with thee. The promise is always made
ood to them who keep the command in faith. The
e is our divine warrant to fight, the other is our
courage ment to fight in certain hopes of victory.
ttend, O my soul, to the promise, and fear not the
complishment of it—"In righteousness shalt thou
e established: thou shalt be far from oppression, for
ou shalt not fear; and from terror, for it shall not
me near thee. Behold, they shall surely gather
gether, but not by me: whosoever shall gather to-
ther against *thee, shall* fall for thy sake. Behold,

sin dead unto sin—freed from the condemning sentence of the law—freed from the dreadful stroke of justice by his death—freed as truly as he is—and therefore thou art no more liable than he is to be condemned and punished. And for the strengthening of this faith, seek for fellowship with him in his death. It is thy privilege, as thou art planted in the likeness of his death, to derive power and efficacy from it, daily to put sin to death. The more steadfastly thou believest that thou art one with him in his death, the more wilt thou find thy sinful nature crucified with him. Communion is always according to the faith of union with Christ. The strongest faith must have the strongest hold of him, and thereby draw the most virtue from him. It is true, as our faith increases we become more spiritual; and we see corruption more, as we see motes in the sun-beams. The senses of the new man, by exercise, gain a quicker perception of sin—we become all over tender as the eye—jealous of the motions, yea, of the appearance of evil. This is real growth. Sin is more felt, in order that the power of Jesus may be put forth to make us hate it, resist it, and overcome it more. As believers are more sensible of their sinfulness in the first Adam, so they grow up into the second Adam, the Lord from heaven; they bear the cross of the corruption of the first, which leads them to constant fellowship with the second—in his death, for the pardon of their corruption—in the power of his death, to mortify sin, that it may not have dominion over them.

Corruption is in thee, and it will strive for dominion. Thy sins will sometimes fiercely assault.

wilt fight against them strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, and thou wilt be invincible

In the whole armour of God. This armour is the provision which God has made for the safety of his soldiers. He puts it on them, and he keeps it on them. It is a whole armour, a complete defence from head to foot. In great mercy, their God, who provided it, has revealed to them the use of every part. In the sixth of the Ephesians, the apostle has described it at large. He supposes them to be acquainted with the Christian doctrines, and to have walked in the comfort of them, and he calls upon them to bring them into practice in their daily warfare: "It only remains, my brethren," says he, "that ye be strong in the Lord,"—for no strength less than his can keep you—"and in the might of what he is able to do;" by faith relying on his promise, and trusting to his power; "putting on the whole armour of God;" that, being strengthened mightily by the Spirit in the inner man, ye may be preserved dependent upon the Lord, and enabled to engage in his strength, and to conquer to his glory. Unless you thus rely upon his word and arm, you will not be able to stand against the wiles of the devil: for we wrestle not only against flesh and blood, but also against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickednesses in high places; therefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be enabled to withstand in the evil day, against the combined legions of earth and hell, and after ye have done all, to stand conquerors in the field of battle, when your enemies are driven out of it.

Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth—this is the first grace in use—

SAVING KNOWLEDGE, which the Holy Spirit teaches. He guides believers into all truth necessary for their salvation. As the military girdle went round the loins, and bound all the armour together, so the knowledge of the truth, as it is in Jesus, binds together all the graces. It is of the essence of every one of them; it is light in the understanding to discover what they are, that they may be received into the heart in love, and that, in obeying the truth, their influence may operate upon the life and conversation. When a man is thus taught of God, then he sees his need of the breast-plate of righteousness, and he puts it on; namely, the

IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS of the God-man. The breast-plate was armour for the vital parts; so is the righteousness of Christ: it is a perfect protection from every stroke of every enemy. He that wears it upon his heart, believing in the life and death of Emmanuel, has armour proof against all weapons. If the strength of his adversaries could be collected into one arm, which was to strike one mighty blow, his breast-plate would ward it off. The armour of God could not be hurt. The soldier with it on cannot perish, but shall have everlasting life. Therefore, covered with this invincible breast-plate, he may face the stoutest foes, and attack them without fear. He may march on undaunted, "having his feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace."

PEACE WITH GOD, through Jesus Christ, is another grace of the Spirit, which mightily strengthens the inner man. Whoever sees the truth of the gos-

FAITH. It is thy grief that sin is in thee. The motions and lustings of it are thy burden. The resisting and opposing them is thy continual warfare; and thou hast no prospect before thee of enjoying perfect deliverance from this heavy cross, until death release thee. Blessed be God for the salvation that is in Christ Jesus. There is a provision made in the covenant of grace for the pardon of indwelling sin, for victory over it daily, and for the eternal destruction of the whole body of sin: it shall have no existence in the members, any more than it has in their glorified Head. Here is a comfort for thee, O my soul, of God's own providing, and of God's own applying. When it is applied to thy heart, the cross will be easy. Observe carefully what is revealed concerning the being of sin in the best Christians, and concerning the pardon of it. The Holy Ghost declares it dwells in them, but they are forgiven all trespasses—they are in Christ without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing—in the first Adam they are heirs of sin, death, and hell; in the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, they are heirs of righteousness, life, and glory. He is their covenant Head, and they are before God what he is. This is the record of truth: Ye are complete in him. Abide by it, O my soul: give it full credit, and boldly plead it against all the charges of guilt, and fears of wrath:—

It is true, I have sin in me, but it is pardoned. God has forgiven me all trespasses. I stand before him in my surety, who undertook for me, and I am perfect in him. The Father chose me in his Son: he looks upon the face of his Beloved, and sees me

in him. In him he is well pleased, so he is with me. As he loves him, so he loves me. This is the glorious privilege which by faith I now enjoy. I deny sight and sense, and I stick to the word of God. I adhere strictly to its testimony concerning me, believing myself to be dead indeed unto sin in Christ, and in him absolutely freed from guilt and condemnation. The Father is at peace with me, and he loves me in his Son, and with the same love with which he loves him—his Father and my Father. With this persuasion I go to war with my corruptions. I see their traitorous designs. They are fighting against every thing that is dear and precious to my soul. But, having the promised grace of the almighty Saviour for my help, I desire to set upon them in his name. I know he has them, among mine other enemies, under his feet; and I have his word for it that he will put them under mine. Yea, Lord, I believe; and on thy faithful promise I trust this day. Although I must carry my cross, yet I bless thee, and worship thee, for removing curse and wrath from it. I can now take it up as thy soldier, and fight against it in thy strength, expecting victory from thee, and to thy glory. O my God, save me from indwelling sin. Let me feel it my burden. Glorify thy grace in me and by me, that, being endued with power from on high, I may hold out, resisting and conquering it, till thou give me everlasting victory.

If this, O my soul, be thy constant dependence, then the cross will become light. Guilt makes it heavy; the curse in it makes it intolerable: but if by faith thou canst see guilt and curse removed, then

it will be no hinderance to thee in thy heavenly walk, but will daily call forth into use and exercise those graces which will help thee forward, and especially

PATIENCE. Here is great need of patience—a continual war—and within thee—thine own bosom the seat of it—and thine own lusts carrying it on, and maintaining it. The more spiritual thou art, the more wilt thou feel this inward conflict. The more thou growest into Christ, the more will thy corruptions stir and move: they will be thy continual plague, so that thou wilt not be able to draw any comfort from what thou art in thyself. Here is exercise for patience. Every where indwelling sin is present with thee; upon every temptation ready with its flatteries to entice, and with its power to break out into act and deed. The opposing it is like cutting off a right hand, and plucking out a right eye—as contrary to nature, and as painful. The hand and the eye cannot be destroyed twice; but inbred lusts, overcome a thousand times, are not in the least discouraged from warring against the soul. Like the troubled sea, never at rest, they are always casting up some sinful mire and dirt. What canst thou do without faith in the Redeemer's blood, without patience to wait for the Redeemer's strength? Every moment there is need of faith and patience; and every moment, if these graces be exercised, they will be improved. The bearing of the cross continually, and fighting under it on the side of God, will also be the means of teaching thee

The TRUE SPIRITUAL MORTIFICATION, which does not consist in sin not being in thee, nor in its being put upon the cross daily, nor yet in its being

kept upon it. There must be something more to establish perfect peace in thy conscience; and that is, the testimony of God concerning the body of sin. He has provided for thy perfect deliverance from it in Christ. Every thing needful for this purpose was finished by him upon the cross. He was thy surety. He suffered for thee. Thy sins were crucified with him, and nailed to his cross. They were put to death when he died: for he was thy covenant Head, and thou, as a member of his body, wast legally represented by him, and art indeed dead to sin by his dying to sin once. The law has now no more right to condemn thee, a believer, than it has to condemn him. Justice is bound to deal with thee, as it has with thy risen and ascended Saviour. If thou dost not thus see thy complete mortification in him, sin will reign in thee. No sin can be crucified, either in heart or life, unless it be first pardoned in conscience; because there will be want of faith to receive the strength of Jesus, by whom alone it can be crucified. If it be not mortified in its guilt, it cannot be subdued in its power. If the believer does not see his perfect deadness to sin in Jesus, he will open a wide door to unbelief; and if he be not persuaded of his completeness in Christ, he gives room for the attacks of self-righteous and legal tempers. If Christ be not all in all, self must still be looked upon as something great, and there will be food left for the pride of self-importance and self-sufficiency. So that he cannot grow into the death of Christ in sensible experience, farther than he believes himself to be dead to sin in Christ. The more clearly and steadfastly he believes this, as the apostle *did*—

I AM CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST, in proportion will he cleave to Christ, and receive from him greater power to crucify sin. This believing view of his absolute mortification in Christ, is the true gospel method of mortifying sin in our own persons.

Examine then, O my soul, the mistakes which thou hast made, and the temptations which thou art under, concerning this leading truth in thy walk. Pray to thy God for his wisdom to guide thee. Without it, thou wilt be afraid where no fear is. Thou wilt be inclined to think this doctrine rather encouraging to sin; because it seems, to carnal reason, to take off thy mind from watchfulness against it, and from praying for victory over it. But be assured this is a great error. If thou art not complete in Christ, thou never canst be complete. Seek for the death of sin where thou wilt, it is not to be found but in his death. Try to conquer it upon any other principle than faith in his death; the very attempt is sinful, and proves thee to be under the law. Unless thou art one with him in his death, there can be no pardon of sin, and consequently no victory over it. O fear not, then, to lay the whole weight of thy salvation upon Jesus. Depend on him as dying to sin for thee, and look at thyself dead to sin in him—as completely dead to it as he is. Read the testimony of the Holy Spirit. Study the infinite, the everlasting sufficiency of his death, for thine absolute freedom from guilt and condemnation. Trust without wavering; be not afraid to view the everlasting perfection of thy deliverance in Jesus, and this will weaken the tyranny, and will crucify the power of sin. This will, and nothing else can. Read the

sixth of the Romans, and pray for the Spirit of revelation to open it to thee. There thou wilt discover the true way to mortify sin. It is by believing, that thou art planted together with Christ in his death: from thence only thy pardon flows, from thence thy daily victory is received, and from thence thy eternal victory will be perfected. Fight on; soon thou shalt be what Christ now is. The member shall be perfectly like the Head. O glorious prospect! Thou shalt be with him, and like him—spotless and fair as Jesus, righteous and holy, happy in body and soul. Thou shalt see him as he is, and awaking after his likeness, thou shalt be satisfied with it. Take up thy cross for the joy here set before thee. Bear it in faith. It will be light and easy to thy pardoned conscience; yea, the carrying of it in patience will bring forth many peaceable fruits of righteousness: among the rest, there is one which in the sight of God is of great price, and which is daily improved by the inward cross; namely,

Humility, which consists in the right knowledge of ourselves, not only of what we have been, but also of what we now are. The best and holiest man upon the earth, has a corrupt fallen nature: he has flesh still, which is always lusting against the Spirit. While he is alive to God he feels it. He is sensible of the inward conflict. Dead men indeed feel nothing. A dead corpse has no sense of the worms which are eating it up. He that has these lusts in him, and warring against his soul, and yet does not feel them, cannot be spiritually alive. A natural man has no sense of them; because they are in him as worms in a dead body: just so it is with the per-

fectionist. But so soon, and so long, as he lives to God, he will perceive them. If he be in happy communion with God, indwelling sin is present to interrupt the enjoyment. If he exercise any grace, this besetting sin tries to weaken its actings. If it be set about any duty, it will hinder him from doing it so perfectly as God requires, and as he could wish. The abiding sense of these truths will keep down pride. The believer will see nothing of his own to trust in; no faith, or hope, or love; no faithfulness to grace, no holy obedience: all is stained and polluted. He is forced to cry out of his best duties—Unclean, unclean! In this school the disciple learns to walk humbly with his God. The more he knows of himself, the more humble he becomes. And he grows in this heavenly grace, the more he is acquainted with the mercy of God in Jesus. This, learned by divine teaching, keeps the believer meek and lowly in his own eyes. Nothing softens and melts the soul into holy tenderness like the sense of God's mercy. A man who feels the plague of his own heart, is never truly humbled until he be pardoned. But when he is justified from all things in Christ, in him a partaker of all spiritual blessings in earth and heaven; when he sees all his salvation of grace, of free sovereign grace, flowing from the absolute favour of electing love, and bestowed upon him, as unworthy an object as ever did or ever can partake of it, then he becomes truly broken-hearted. These truths, taught of God, bring every high thought into subjection to Christ Jesus. The soul bows before him, lies low at his feet; prostrates itself before the throne of his grace, and desires to be kept

willing to take all its blessings out of his hands, and to use them to his glory. This is gospel humility; the true abasement of spirit, with which a man, sensible that he is saved by mere mercy, loathes himself. And while the experience of indwelling sin humbles him down to the dust, it produces, through God's grace, the happiest effects: for it keeps him in his strong tower and sanctuary, in which alone he is

SAFE. It is ever reminding him of the need of the blood of sprinkling—ever showing him his want of a perfect righteousness—and ever preaching to him the necessity of his being kept by the power of God. And while he hearkens to these lessons, trusting to Jesus, he will stand fast and be established. The arm of the Lord God Almighty will hold him up, and he shall be safe. While he lives thus out of himself, the sense of indwelling sin will lead him to his true

HAPPINESS, which is all in the fulness of the God-man. He will enjoy the more of this, the less he finds in himself. When he cannot draw comfort from any thing of his own, he will seek it more in God. When all the streams are dried up, he will get nearer to the fountain-head, and live more upon it. This is the portion of the Lord's people, and the inheritance of all his saints. And in this view, indwelling sin is made the means of promoting their

HOLINESS. They see their continual need of Christ. They can do nothing without him; but, believing their oneness with him, they desire to improve it in experience. Every thing they do keeps them sensible of their sins and wants, and shows them the necessity of living by the faith of the Son of

God. This is true humility. The more they are humbled, the more they receive out of the fulness of Jesus; for he giveth more grace—more, to produce nearer fellowship with him in his death, whereby sin will be more dead; and in his resurrection, whereby the soul will be more alive to God. So that the humblest believer is the nearest to God, and is the safest, happiest, and holiest of all the men upon earth, because he has most fellowship with God. He dwells in God, and God in him. Meditate, O my soul, upon this use of this cross. Is sin in thee? Dost thou feel it, and art thou fighting against it? And does not this humble thee? Art thou freely forgiven all trespasses, indwelling sin among the rest? Dost thou know that thou art a saved sinner—a brand plucked out of hell? And does not this humble thee? I see reason enough to be humbled, but I feel pride in me lusting against humility. O my precious Jesus, humble me under thy mighty hand. To thee I look for all my salvation. Lord, save me from pride. Thou hast made me willing to be taught of thee to be meek and lowly, and I come to thee, praying that the disciple may be as his Master. O let me drink deep into thy Spirit. In every day's warfare against my corruptions, enable me to renounce myself, that I may find thou art carrying both me and my cross. Keep me humbled at thy feet, that thou mayest exalt me in due time. I pray to thee, my precious Saviour, for this grace, to mine eternal humbling, and to thine eternal exaltation. In life and death, and for evermore, I hope to glory only in the Lord, and to triumph in the God of my salvation.

Thus the believer learns to walk humbly under the inward cross. He is brought to trust all in the Saviour's hand. Daily he discovers more of the ruins of the fall, which lead him to fresh discoveries of the perfect salvation in Jesus. If he attend to what is passing in his own breast, he finds his need of a Saviour every moment, and for every thing: by which means he grows in grace, and in the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord. He learns to put no confidence in the flesh; but to rejoice only in his completeness in Jesus, from whom all his comforts and victories are received. Thus, while self is laid low, the Saviour is exalted, and his perfect work is more depended on. The believer, by hope and love, obtains more delightful communion with his God. Indwelling sin is his cross: but he bears it, looking unto Jesus; from whom he receives strength to go on, yea, to run the race set before him. By faith he sees in Jesus the corruption of his nature condemned and dead in law: he beholds himself freed from this, as well as from his other sins. Guilt is the most galling part of this cross; but when guilt is thus removed from the conscience, then the cross grows light. When taken up in faith, and carried in love to the Almighty Saviour, then it does not stop the believer in his fellowship with Jesus, or in his happy walk with him. Glory be to thee, my Lord, of this I have some experience. Yes, precious Jesus, I know the infinite value of that sacrifice which put away sin. I bless thee for that offering which perfects for ever. Interested in it, I would not distrust my completeness in thee. Through thy holy nature, I expect to be

renewed after thy likeness. The fountain for cleansing from the filth of sin stands open: in it I daily wash my spotted soul. In thy divine righteousness, I see the law and justice of the Father infinitely honoured by justifying me, and dealing with me as perfectly righteous. Complete in thee I am. In thy work finished upon earth I am perfect, and am represented as such by thee in heaven. I believe thou appearest there as my divine Intercessor, bearing my name upon thy shoulders, and upon thy breast, with a glory beyond all the precious stones in the world. O my blessed Jesus, increase this faith. Lead me from faith to faith, that, while I am travelling heavenwards, mine eye and my heart may be more simply fixed upon thee. Come, thou glorifier of the Saviour, and discover to me more of the sinfulness of sin, and of my need of his salvation. Holy Spirit, teach me in the deepest sense of indwelling sin, to trust wholly to the offering of the body of Jesus. O lead me to his cross, there to see all my sins nailed, crucified with him, dead in his death, buried in his grave: in this faith strengthen me mightily to resist and to conquer my corruptions. Enable me to experience the power of his cross, that I may feel sin weakened in the love and in the practice of it. Almighty Spirit, in my daily warfare I find no strength less than thine can make me conqueror: and therein thou hast caused me to put my trust. Awake, awake; put on strength, O arm of the Lord: awake as in the ancient days, in the generations of old. Art thou not it that cut the pride of nature to pieces, and wounded the old dragon? O my God, magnify thine arm in subduing every

sin. Thou seest my naked heart, and its sighings are not hid from thee. My corruptions are indeed my cross: and they would have been a sore burden, too heavy for me to bear, if the curse had not been taken out of them. But still, pardoned as they are, yet in this tabernacle I do groan, being burdened. I believe the day is coming when I shall have perfect and eternal freedom from sin and sorrow: the first-fruits of this, only make me long the more for the blessed harvest. But I desire to wait in hope, bearing my cross, till thy will be done. O Lord, make me willing to resist, give me power to overcome indwelling sin, till the day of redemption and mortality be swallowed up of life. Hear me, my good God, and answer me, for thy name's sake, to the glory of Father, Son, and Spirit, the Three in one Jehovah, to whom my heart now bows in worship, and my soul hopes soon to join in the song of never-ceasing praise. Amen, and amen.

CHAPTER XI.

The Believer fights the good fight of Faith, and goes forth conquering and to conquer.

When the believer has been disciplined under the cross, and has learned to bear it with patience, the Captain of his salvation has other exercises for him. He has chosen him to be a soldier, and he intends to teach him to endure hardness. His life in Christ is one continued battle, not only against

flesh and blood, but also against principalities and powers of earth and hell: he cannot discover their stratagems, nor overcome their assaults, but by being strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. His warfare is therefore to be carried on entirely by faith. The principles before laid down must be brought into use. What the Spirit of God has discovered to him of his salvation in Jesus, is to be tried in every battle; and if it be maintained, it will be improved. If he hold fast the confidence of his faith, he will behave like a good soldier. If he always takes up arms in absolute dependence on the Divine General, to give him courage, to order him how to attack his enemies, to bestow strength upon him daily to resist them, then victory will be certain. Yea, he will be invincible, while he stands strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. He will meditate upon the principles which he had been taught of God, and will find peace in his own conscience, and joy in his heart, by bringing them into daily experience. His believing views of the warfare to which he is called, will be such as these:—

I am, through sovereign grace, called to fight under the banner of Jesus. He has not left me to fight as uncertainly, but he has conquered all mine enemies for me, and he has undertaken to conquer them all in me. It is true, I am weak; but my Redeemer is strong: the Lord of hosts is his name. He has saved me from my sins, from the shame and pain of them, from the wicked one, and the wicked world, from the curse of the law, and from the wrath of God. He has given me a divine righteousness for my justification, and in it I am accepted before

the throne: he has put it upon me for ornament and defence—it is a garment of salvation, which cannot be lost upon earth, and which will shine with never-fading beauty in heaven. The Father is perfectly reconciled, and loves me with a love that passes knowledge. I believe it. God is on my side: I need not fear what any enemy can do unto me. He has taken me into his protection. By his all-wise counsel I am guided; by his almighty arm I am defended. My battles are the Lord's. Indeed, mine enemies are many, and they are too cunning and too mighty for me. But why do they now fight against me? Is it not because God is my friend? They hate me, because he loves me. While I lived in friendship with them, and was at war with God, they were always trying to make me happy: but ever since I fled to Jesus for refuge, and sought redemption in his blood, they have taken up arms against me; and they have raged more furiously since I was enabled to believe in him. But I have no reason to fear their opposition. With them is an arm of flesh, but with me is the Lord my God to help me, and to fight my battles. I may therefore go to my daily warfare in faith, regarding the commands, waiting for the fulfilling of the promises of my God, and relying upon the provision which he has made for my present and for mine eternal victory.

Are thy meditations, O my soul, like these upon the Christian warfare? Examine thyself. If thou art at peace with God, thou must expect war. It is unavoidable. If it be in thy heart to please him who hath chosen thee to be a soldier, then all the powers of wickedness will be in arms. Night and

day, with never-ceasing rage, they will pursue thee. Deep-laid plans will be formed, and fierce assaults will be made against thy true happiness. They will be attempting, so long as thou art in the world, by some cunning or force, to draw thee from thy God. Thy life, from henceforth, is to be one continued battle. Thy victory depends every moment upon holding fast thy confidence in God; and therefore thou must bring the principles of the doctrine of Christ into exercise. Thou hast seen how necessary they are for every step of thy walk, and thou wilt find them equally necessary for every part of thy warfare. This is a leading truth: thine enemies are God's enemies. Once thou didst join with them, and wast on their side fighting against God, but he has saved thee from the guilt of thy rebellion. In free love he chose thee in his Son, and in sovereign mercy gave him for thee. The Son rejoiced to do his Father's will for thy salvation: he did it in his life; he suffered it in his death. The ever-glorious work is finished; and it is given thee on the behalf of Christ to believe. The Lord the Spirit has satisfied thy conscience, and has comforted thy heart with the knowledge of this perfect salvation. The Father is thy Father in Jesus—thine by his own free gift—thine by his own unchangeable purpose—and now thine by thy free choice. He has made thee willing in the day of his power to take him for thy God. He is perfectly reconciled unto thee in his Son: and should not this perfectly reconcile thee to him? His love to thee is wonderful in all its properties, in its rise and origin, and in its free and full communication of every covenant blessing. And

does not the belief of this engage thy heart in love to God? Dost thou not love him for his love to thee; and is it not thy daily prayer that thy love may abound yet more and more? Has not the sense of this peace and love been improved in thy daily walk with him? Hast thou not found the truth, and enjoyed the comfort of these graces in thine experience? O fear not then, since God is on thy side—fear not, O my soul, to go to war with any enemy, who would rob thee of the peace of God in thy conscience, or of the love of God in thy heart. This is the design of all those who fight against thee. They want to shake thy confidence in God, and so to draw thee from him. They know they cannot succeed while thou standest strong in the Lord, trusting to his being thy reconciled God and loving Father. O keep this trust in him, as the apple of thine eye—bind it continually to thy heart in love—and fight for it as for thy precious life. Be assured no enemies can prevail against thee, until they have first overcome thy faith: because, while thou makest God thy refuge and strength, his almighty arm will be thy defence. "Be not afraid," says he, "I am with thee, and I will keep thee by my power, through faith, unto salvation."

In this warfare, it is the chief business of the believer to have respect to the orders given him. He is entirely to depend on the Captain of his salvation. What has he said, O my soul, to encourage thee to go to battle without fear? Mind his description—it is the good fight of faith in which thou art engaged. By faith thou art to attack thy foes; by faith alone thou canst conquer them; and faith must have his

COMMANDS, or else it can have no lawful warrant to fight, and no just ground to expect victory. Indeed, if he had spoken nothing, there could have been no faith: for his word comes first—it is spoken—it is heard—and then faith comes by hearing. Look well then to his word. Study it carefully. If thou obey it aright, thou art absolutely safe in the hottest battle; and thy victory is as certain as if the crown was already upon thy head. These are his standing orders—"Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not afraid, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. Behold all they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded: they shall be as nothing, and they that strive with thee shall perish. Thou shalt seek them, and shalt not find them, even them that contended with thee: they that war against thee shall be as nothing, and as a thing of nought; for the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not, I will help thee. Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy Redeemer, the holy One of Israel." Are these indeed the words of God? Does he command poor worms, weak and defenceless, to go to war without fear? Does he encourage them to look up to his arm, promising to be on their side? Yes, the Lord of hosts fights for them. All their enemies are his, and therefore they may safely trust, and not be afraid. O my soul, read carefully, read again and again, mark and inwardly digest every word of this divine command; and in obedience to it expect his help. Face thine

enemies, whoever they be, with holy boldness; for God is with thee. He has undertaken to fight thy battles. Look at this scripture. Canst thou meditate on it, and yet be afraid? Of whom, or of what? O vile unbelieving fear! Beg of God to save thee from it. Honour the Captain of thy salvation. Trust him. Doubt not but thou art as safe, obeying his orders and expecting his help, as almighty power can make thee. Observe the courage of one of thy fellow-soldiers—observe his victory: "When I cry unto thee, then shall mine enemies be turned back: this I know, for God is on my side. In God will I praise his word; in the Lord will I praise his word: in God have I put my trust, I will not be afraid what man can do unto me." The enemies of David came to swallow him up, but he encouraged himself in the Lord his God. He attended to his orders. He considered the word which was spoken to him, he depended upon it, and had reason to praise God for his faithfulness; for God fulfilled it unto him. There was in it a

PROMISE, as well as a command—Do this—and I will be with thee. The promise is always made good to them who keep the command in faith. The one is our divine warrant to fight, the other is our encouragement to fight in certain hopes of victory. Attend, O my soul, to the promise, and fear not the accomplishment of it—"In righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression, for thou shalt not fear; and from terror, for it shall not come near thee. Behold, they shall surely gather together, but not by me: whosoever shall gather together against thee, shall fall for thy sake. Behold,

I have created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire, and that bringeth forth an instrument for his work, and I have created the waster to destroy. No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper, and every tongue that shall rise in judgment against thee thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord." Thou art here forewarned of thine enemies: they shall gather against thee. But the Lord is not with them. He is thy defender and mighty deliverer, and he will bring all opposition to nought for thy sake. However numerous their hosts may be, yet they shall fall. Whatever weapons of war they may form, yet none of them shall prosper. This is the certain heritage of all believers. Their righteousness and their strength is of me, saith the Lord—I will fight their battles, and I will never leave them nor forsake them: I will make them daily conquerors; and behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised them, I will make them more than conquerors.

Is this, O my soul, the infallible word of promise? Has the Lord of hosts undertaken to stand by his people? Has he engaged to lead them out to war by his wisdom, to defend them in battle by his power, and to give them eternal victory to the praise of his own grace? O what motives are these to strengthen thy heart and thy hands! What hast thou reason to fear, since the Almighty is on thy side? The battle is his. If hosts of enemies oppose, yet following his orders, and trusting to his strength, thy victory is infallibly sure: for then thou

wilt fight against them strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, and thou wilt be invincible

In the whole armour of God. This armour is the provision which God has made for the safety of his soldiers. He puts it on them, and he keeps it on them. It is a whole armour, a complete defence from head to foot. In great mercy, their God, who provided it, has revealed to them the use of every part. In the sixth of the Ephesians, the apostle has described it at large. He supposes them to be acquainted with the Christian doctrines, and to have walked in the comfort of them, and he calls upon them to bring them into practice in their daily warfare: "It only remains, my brethren," says he, "that ye be strong in the Lord,"—for no strength less than his can keep you—"and in the might of what he is able to do;" by faith relying on his promise, and trusting to his power; "putting on the whole armour of God;" that, being strengthened mightily by the Spirit in the inner man, ye may be preserved dependent upon the Lord, and enabled to engage in his strength, and to conquer to his glory. Unless you thus rely upon his word and arm, you will not be able to stand against the wiles of the devil: for we wrestle not only against flesh and blood, but also against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickednesses in high places; therefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be enabled to withstand in the evil day, against the combined legions of earth and hell, and after ye have done all, to stand conquerors in the field of battle, when your enemies are driven out of it.

experience the promised victory. To the same effect the apostle Peter stirs up believers to a sobriety in the use of all creature comforts, and to a continual watchfulness against their enemies, in order that they might daily conquer: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist steadfast in the faith." This brings victory. The believer resists the devil, and stands against him steadfastly in the power of Christ. This power is almighty; and therefore faith, relying upon it, infallibly secures victory. The devil may throw his fiery darts thick and fast, but the shield of faith is proof against them. It is able, through God, to quench them; so that the fire of temptation shall not inflame the soul. How precious are these scriptures! how encouraging to the Christian soldier! They promise him every thing needful for the battle and for victory. Why then shouldst thou doubt, O my soul, of the promised blessings? Take courage. Fight under the banner of Jesus. Keep close to his colours. Follow strictly his order; and he will keep Satan under thy feet to-day, and thou shalt be more than conqueror over him for ever.

Considering thy war with Satan in this light, what is there in it, O my soul, to stop thee in thy way to heaven? Thou art called upon to fight against him, but then it is in the Lord's strength, and as a partaker of his conquest. He made all thine enemies his. He fought thy battles. His triumph is thine. Thou mayest therefore sing of victory before every battle. Thou dost not fight to gain the pardon of thy sins, or to make *thyself* righteous; but to oppose thine

pel, and believes it, will discover God to be at peace with him, perfectly reconciled to him in Jesus, and who, out of his fatherly love, will overrule all things for his good. In the sense of this he may go on with holy boldness, as the soldier did with his greaves on. When his feet and legs were armed with them, he was not afraid of thorns or briers, of rough roads or sharp spikes. In like manner, the peace which the gospel brings, carries the Christian soldier fearless through difficulties. He will march on conquering, if he keep on his greaves. If he maintain peace with God through Jesus Christ, he will not be stopped by war, or trouble, or temptation. But he must remember, that to every piece of armour faith is essentially necessary—the girdle is good for nothing, without the belief of the truth—the breastplate is no defence, without faith in the righteousness of God our Saviour—the greaves are no more than if the feet were covered with a bit of thin gauze, unless faith may be mixed with the gospel: "Therefore, to all these take the shield of faith, wherewith we shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one." What excellent things are here spoken of

FAITH, as a grace of the Holy Spirit! When they used to fight with bows and arrows, the soldier could hold up his shield and keep himself safe: so the Christian soldier, if the fiery darts of Satan fly thick about him, by faith will quench them all. He has much combustible within him, and one spark would set him in a flame, if he had not his shield: but armed with it, and opposing it to the arrows of the wicked one, he may lift up his head with joy:

"for he has the helmet of salvation" upon it. The grace here meant is

HOPE, and it is fitly compared to a helmet, which was armour for the head, and a defence for all the senses which are seated in the head. It is called the helmet of salvation, because it always saves. It never can be destroyed. None of the senses of the spiritual man can perish in this warfare, and therefore it is a hope that maketh not ashamed. Hope, with its helmet on, fears no blows. I can truly say, I am commanded to be strong and of good courage, not to be afraid or dismayed; for the Lord my God is with me, whithersoever I go. Trusting to this command, hope is in wars and fightings full of glory and immortality. The Lord's orders to march forward are the ground of hope: and this supplies him with a weapon which none of his enemies can withstand, even the sword of the Spirit, "which is the

"WORD OF GOD." The Scripture is called a sword, (an offensive weapon; and it is the only one which a Christian soldier has—all the rest being for his defence,) because it is mighty, through the Spirit working by it, to cut off all opposers. Our Lord, in combat with the old serpent, defeated him with this sword. And the noble army of his followers, now crowned in glory, overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and "by the word of their testimony;" they held fast their confidence in the word, and with it, as with a two-edged sword, they slew the old dragon, and gained eternal victory over him. Fight against him, O my soul, with the same weapon. Keep the sword in thy hand. Thou wilt stand in need of it every moment against that subtle foe. The word is

the means of overcoming the devil, and it is mighty, through God, when heard and read in faith, and inwardly digested by prayer. The best soldier in the Lord's army is best acquainted with the necessity of prayer: he not only believes what God says of his armour, but he also depends upon him for the daily experience of it: and therefore, when he has put his armour on, in the

PRAYER OF FAITH, he calls upon the Captain of his salvation for orders, courage, strength, victory, and every thing needful: "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance." O my God, teach me thus to pray. I would depend on thee, and express my dependence without ceasing: for I am sensible that without thee I can do nothing. Although thou hast chosen me to be a soldier, yet I have neither counsel nor strength for war. My foolish heart loves ease: it would have the crown, but it would be excused striving lawfully for it. I find nothing in myself that disposes me to endure the hardship of the Christian warfare. My whole trust, therefore, is in thee, Jesus, my Lord and my God. Thou hast called me to the battle, thou must fit me for it, keep me in it, and make me conqueror. All is of thee. The whole armour of God which I have received, the saving knowledge, the righteousness and the peace, that precious faith and glorious hope, that sure word, wherein thou hast caused me to put my trust; these are the gifts of thy grace, and on thee, my Jesus, I entirely depend for the right use of them. Thou must still cover my head in the day of battle. Mine eyes are lifted up to thee, my hopes

centre in thee, from whom alone cometh all my salvation. O Lord of hosts, keep me in this simple dependence upon thy word and arm, that I may exercise thy graces in fighting thy battles; and if thou art pleased to give me daily victory, I may be willing to return thee all thy glory. O faithful promise-keeping God, stand by me, and enable me to hold out, till I finish my course with joy; and my warfare being ended, I may bless thee for evermore for that peace which passeth all understanding. O grant me this for thy mercies' sake. Amen.

If this be thy dependence, if thou art standing in the Lord's strength, and trusting entirely to his armour, then consider, O my soul, thy safety in every battle. If thou go to war, calling upon thy God to be with thee, and to give thee victory, then victory is certain. Thou canst not be conquered, if thou fight in faith, relying upon the orders of thy General, expecting his promised help, and waiting for it in prayer, trusting to the armour which he has put upon thee. Is this then thy defence? Dost thou pray always—begin the good fight—carry it on—and end it with the prayer of faith? Blessed be his holy name, since this is in some measure thy case, go on in his strength, and fear not to fight his battles, who hath chosen thee to be a soldier. Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thy heart. The more bold thou art in thy faith, the stronger shalt thou be in thy warfare: for whatever thou hast courage to do at his command, thou shalt perform in his strength. And why should a doubt arise? Hast thou forgotten, that the great decisive battle has been fought and won? Emmanuel stood up the

has promised not to leave me nor forsake me. O that I may honour his promise, and without doubting rely upon his faithful arm to make it good!

Consider then, O my soul, the principles of the doctrine of Christ. Review them carefully. Thou seest what influence they have upon every step of thy walk, and how mighty they are, through God, to carry thee through all thy difficulties. O study, then, the perfect freeness and the absolute sufficiency of the salvation of Jesus. Read and mark the bonds and securities which a faithful God has given thee to trust in, and not to be afraid. The time to honour them most, is to believe them when thou hast the least sensible evidence; for that is the strongest faith. If thou canst believe upon his bare word, and it is a very good warrant, thy feet shall stand firm upon the rock, and thy goings shall be well ordered: and that thou mayest believe this in the hardest trials, God informs thee that thy continuance in grace does not depend on thyself. "Thou standest by faith;" and faith should direct thee to what God has undertaken and has promised to do for thee. He would have thee to place the confidence of thy heart upon his tried word, which is a never-failing foundation; and if thou wast to build all thy hopes of persevering upon it, it would quiet thy fears and comfort thy heart. Thou wouldst then see that God has not left thee to thyself to stand or fall, but has engaged never to leave thee nor forsake thee. He has declared he will not turn away from thee to do thee good, and he will put his fear into thy heart, and thou shalt not turn away from him. View thy case in this comfortable light, and while thou art

by following thine orders, fighting thy battles, and relying entirely upon thy promises. I would not question thy faithfulness to them, nor fear any enemy against whom thou hast commanded me to fight. I would not doubt of thy strength to carry me through the battle, or to give me the promised victory. In this faith I conduct my warfare, and I would have all my success to bring fresh glory to thee. I know that the courage which I have in the field of battle is not from nature, but from grace. It arises from the belief, that I am armed with the whole armour of God, and that the enemies against whom I fight, are his as well as mine—his, whom he conquered for me, and is now conquering in me; and all to his own praise. From hence, Lord, arises my sure and certain hope of victory. I ground it on thy word. I fight in faith. I trust to thy complete victory, and now am sharing in it. My daily victories are only the fruit and effect of thine. O my almighty Jesus, give me grace to ascribe all the glory to thee. It is thy due. Make we willing to give it thee for the victories obtained for me, and in me. O keep me by thine almighty power, through faith, till I have fought the good fight, and won the prize. Grant me this, blessed King of saints, to thine eternal honour and glory. Amen.

CHAPTER XII.

The Believer marches on, fighting the good fight of Faith, and daily gains victory over the world.

THE world signifies the visible frame of nature; not the earth only, but also the present constitution of the universe, of animate and inanimate beings: all which were created good at first, but, through the sin of man, and the just sentence of God, are now subject to vanity.

The world has become a great enemy to fallen man; because it is always presenting something to his senses which is a temptation to sin. It keeps him from God by its flatteries, promising to make him happy in its enjoyments. It sets them before him. He looks and loves. He gives his heart a willing sacrifice to the world, and suffers himself to be entirely influenced by its hopes and fears.

While man was innocent, every object raised in him some spiritual idea, and thereby led him to contemplate and adore the great Creator in his works; but upon the fall, he lost this use of natural objects; they did not, as they struck upon his senses, excite correspondent ideas in the mind; because the man was "alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that was in him." His understanding was in darkness: he could not see the things of the Spirit of God; neither could he know them, for want of spiritual discernment. Being thus deprived of the image and likeness of God in knowledge, having

no will but the will of the flesh, and his heart being at enmity with God, he sinks into communion with the creature. His very mind is carnal. His affections are earthly. His pursuits are after temporal things. His enjoyments are in the delights of sense. In this state he lives a mere animal life, without God in the world.

Indeed he has within him an immortal soul, but it is apostate. It is fallen from God, and has no more communion with him by nature than the devil has. The law has condemned it to death: the soul that sinneth it shall die;—and it is already spiritually dead to God, being as incapable of quickening itself as a dead corpse is. Therefore it cannot attain of itself any true knowledge of God, or have any real fellowship with the things of God. While fallen man is in this state, his earthly and sensual appetites take the lead; and all the light in his mind, and the desires of his heart, only dispose him to seek for their present gratification. Outward objects offer themselves to him; they make an impression upon his senses, and sometimes act upon them very forcibly, soliciting and enticing to the enjoyment of some fancied good; and so long as he continues an unregenerate man, these temptations prevail, and keep him from God. He does not see God in outward objects. He does not love God for them. He does not enjoy them to the glory of God. God is not in all his thoughts.

Man has been called a microcosm. He is so wonderfully made, that the whole creation comes under the observation of some of his senses. His eye, by means of light, can discover the form and surface of

all objects. The ear takes in all sounds. The nose perceives all vapours and smells. The palate tastes all sorts of fluids. All sorts of solids come under the sense of feeling, which is in every part of the body, for the benefit and preservation of the whole. Thus every object in the universe is fitted to act upon some of the senses, and was intended by the Creator to excite some spiritual idea. But this use was lost by the fall. The impression made by outward objects does not raise up the mind to God, and excite adoration and praise; but keeps the heart from him, and affords a continual temptation to live to the world, and to the things of it. Whatever is presented to the eye, to the ear, &c. can stir up and bring forth evil. And actually does, according to the scripture: for "the whole world," as fallen from God, "lieth in wickedness," and is at enmity with him; and therefore believers are commanded, "Love ye not the world, neither the things that are in the world: if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him: for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." Mind, all that is in the world is the means of feeding some lust; for which reason the apostle calls it "this present evil world,"—evil because of sin, and because of its temptations to keep the heart in love with it, and to shut out the love of the Father.

How awfully solemn are these scriptures! What strict examination, O my soul, should they put thee upon! Search and try thyself by them, and see whether thou art saved from the love of the world. It is a blessed part of redemption, and it is one of

the trials of thy faith, to preserve thee under them, and to bring thee out of them! Read carefully, over and over again, these promises; and may every reading of them disperse the cloud of unbelief, until thy soul be enlivened with the light of the Lord's loving countenance.

But perhaps thou art in a worse case as to thine own apprehension: Thou thinkest, 'God is incensed against me, and justly—he has cast me off, and I can expect no more favour at his hand: once, indeed, I thought he loved me, but I have fallen into a great sin—an old besetting sin—my conscience accuses me of committing it against light and conviction—it is a foul black spot, such as is not to be found upon the children of God.'

Thou art fallen: and wilt thou lie there, and not be raised up again? Thou art under guilt: and wilt thou nurse it, and add sin to sin? Aggravate the sinfulness of thy fall as much as thou wilt, yet thou canst not be truly humbled for it, but by returning to God, and by trusting in the plenteous redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Then thy heart will be softened and melted into love, for grace will have its due honour, and thou wilt see what the Scripture says of thy case, in its divine truth and majesty. Thou wilt feel thyself exactly what the word of God says of thee—a fallen sinful creature: in thee (that is, in thy flesh) dwelleth no good thing; so that there is not any sin but thou art capable of falling into it, through the strength of temptation. So long as thou art in the body, the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: in this conflict thou mayest fall, but the

described, in their true nature. The world could not impose upon him. He lived above its offers of good, and he feared not the worst of its threatened evils. When he began his ministry, he fought a pitched battle, and became an eternal conqueror: the prince of this world was permitted to try every object, by which the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, or the pride of life had seduced mankind. They were presented to Christ in their richest dress. The beauty, the pleasure, the honour, and riches of the world, were set before him in all their glory. But they made no impression. They did not darken his understanding, nor influence his heart, nor provoke any sensual appetite. He rejected every pleasing offer; he withstood every flattering allurement. Thus he conquered the world, but not for himself. His victory over all his temptations was for his people. He accounted their enemies his. He fought their battles. He conquered, as a king for his subjects. And he gives them to share with him in his triumph when they believe in him; for thus he encourages them: "These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace: in the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good courage, I have overcome the world." The world is your enemy. It had you in bondage, and you could not free yourselves; therefore I came in your nature, God manifest in the flesh, to conquer it for you; and I have obtained a perfect conquest. When I have proclaimed it to your consciences, and pardoned your idolatrous attachment to the world—when in me ye have found peace, yet still the world will be your enemy. Because I have chosen you out of it, there-

fore it will hate you. My peace will occasion and increase your tribulation in it. But fear not. Remember it is a vanquished foe. Attack it in my strength, as partakers of my victory. Fight against it, and treat it as under my feet, and made my footstool. Whenever it tempts you, depend absolutely upon my conquest, and you will find my grace almighty to crucify the world to you, and you to it.

How animating are these words! with what courage should they inspire the Christian soldier! Although the world be his enemy, yet it cannot conquer him, and rob him of his crown. The main battle has been fought, the victory is gained, and the conqueror is already crowned in the name and person of all the redeemed. By faith he gives them their share in his victory, as it is written, "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." Every person who is born again by the Spirit has a new nature, spiritual and heavenly, and has new senses to exercise about spiritual things. His renewed faculties were formed for heavenly things, as his bodily senses are for material. By faith he sees a better world than this, and surveys its beauties and glories. He has ears to hear the joyful sound of gospel grace, and to receive it. When that name, which is dear and precious above every name, is preached, it is to him as ointment poured forth: the sweet-smelling savour refreshes his heart, and exhilarates his spirits. Then he tastes that the Lord is gracious—foretastes his heavenly love, and as truly lays hold of and enjoys its spiritual blessings, as he ever did of any thing material. He is created anew in Christ Jesus, not

crown of glory as the merited reward of any works of righteousness done by him: the promises are all of free grace, not dependent on man's will, but on God's; not yea and nay, but of absolutely certain fulfilment. They were all made in the covenant to Christ the head, and are already made good to Christ, as the head, for the use of his members—"For all the promises of God are in him, Yea, and in him, Amen." He was given for the covenant of his people, and as such he undertook to do all their works for them and in them, and therefore all the promised blessings of the covenant are laid up in his fulness—"in him they are Yea"—and laid up, as the head has the fulness of the senses, for the use of his members—"in him they are Amen." He communicates the promised blessings freely, not conditionally; by believing, and not for working: "Therefore," says the apostle, speaking of Christ's righteousness, "it is of faith, that it might be by grace, to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed."

In this sovereign manner and style runs the covenant, and every promise in it—"I will be their God:" of mine own mere motion and grace, and according to the good pleasure of mine own will—"and they shall be my people:" my will shall make them willing in the day of my power; for I will work in them both to will and do: yea, "I will be a Father unto them, and they shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." The word FATHER relates to his children, and expresses the unchangeable love of his heart towards them: it is a dear covenant name, and denotes the inseparable connexion between him and

choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward." How great was this faith! How glorious its victories! It was a divine grace, and exercised by a divine operation—mighty through God. By it Moses saw the reality of heavenly things; by it he tasted their sweetness, enjoyed their blessedness, and had a hope full of glory and immortality. The world made him its highest offers, but he rejected them. His eye was kept single, his heart chaste towards his God. The honour of Pharaoh's alliance he despised. He preferred affliction with the people of God, to the pleasures of sin. He embraced reproach when it came on him for following Christ, and he esteemed it beyond all the treasures of Egypt. He saw the vanity and emptiness of earthly enjoyments, and he trampled upon them having respect unto the recompense of the reward. Thus he was crucified to the world. What an exalted character! There is no such hero in the records of profane history; but, thank God, there are great numbers in sacred, who follow the steps of his faith. Every soldier of Christ Jesus is called to war against the world, and every good soldier is a daily conqueror. The world is always present, and has its temptations ready to stop him; but he meets them strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, trusting to the whole armour of God. Then victory is certain. And in order that the Lord may have all the glory, he will keep him fighting and praying in this manner:—

This world is not my portion. My happiness does not consist in loving and enjoying the things of it. It is an evil world—it lieth in wickedness—Satan has his seat and throne in it—and it is condemned to fire. Thank God, mine eyes are open to see a better world than this, and I am travelling to it. I believe it was the purpose and will of the Eternal Three, to choose me to be an heir of the world to come. Glory be to the Father for his free choice, and for all the blessings of his love. Glory be to the co-equal Son, for his complete and everlastingly perfect salvation. Glory be to the Eternal Spirit, to whom I am indebted for what I believe of the Son's salvation, and for what I have experienced of the Father's love. On thee, O God the Holy Ghost, I place my dependence for carrying on the work which thou hast begun. I would be guided by thy counsel every step of my walk, and strengthened by thee for every part of my warfare. Keep me in the right way, and make me conqueror over all the enemies who would stop me in it, or turn me out of it; especially deliver me from this present evil world. While I am going through it to a better, preserve my heart from the love of it. O my God, give me a stranger's temper, and a pilgrim's frame. Let me live a sojourner here below, that the good things I meet with on my journey may not tempt me to make this my rest; and the evil things I meet with may not lead me to fret and murmur, as if God was not my Father, and his heaven my home. O thou divine Teacher, show me daily the glory of my Saviour's victory over the world, that I may share with him in it; and enable me to go forth conquer-

Art thou then, O my soul, established in this great truth? Dost thou yield to the power of the evidence which the blessed Trinity have vouchsafed to give thee? Meditate carefully upon it for the growth of thy faith. Search the Scriptures, and observe how clearly God declares his fixed purpose to keep his people, and to hold them up unto the end. The great preacher of the gospel in the Old Testament church, speaks thus of the unchangeable will of a covenant God: "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee." A great preacher in the New Testament church has confirmed the same precious truth. He is treating of the golden chain of salvation, and showing how inseparable every link of it is; and in this prospect he triumphs: "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loveth us." By the mouth of these two infallible witnesses the truth is established—they depose that the covenant is immutable, and that nothing can separate believers from the love wherewith God loves them in his Son. O most comfortable doctrine! How encouraging is it, in any undertaking, to set about it with certain hope of success! How ani-

mating in our Christian walk, how reviving in the dark and difficult path of it, to have God's promise that he will keep us, and bring us to a happy end! How pleasing is it to go on by faith in our warfare, casting all our care upon him who careth for us! How delightful is it to trust his promise, and daily to find it made good: "Ye are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto eternal salvation." Here, O my soul, thou art to seek for strong consolation amidst the trials and difficulties of thy walk. Thou art afraid of falling—God has engaged to hold thee up. Thou hast been tempted to think thou shouldst fall quite away, and come to nothing—but God says, thou art preserved in Christ Jesus. His covenant and oath are made to confirm the faith of thy persevering. Thou standest by faith, and thy faith should lead thee to rest safely on what God says about thy standing: and for thy faith itself, its continuing, its increasing, thou hast his infallible faithfulness to depend upon. Thou art weak—but he keeps thee by his power. Thine enemies are strong—but none of them shall pluck thee out of his hand. Thou art willing to join them, and to depart from the living God—but he has promised to put his fear into thy heart, and thou shalt not depart from him. He meets with thy doubts, and answers all thine objections in a word—for he hath said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

Be of good courage then, O my soul, and go forward, strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, and he will bring thee safe to the end of thy journey. He has promised it. Put thyself into his hands, and give him the glory of keeping thee.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name, for undertaking to save thee from those enemies. The love of the Father gave his Son to be the woman's seed—Jehovah incarnate—for his people. In their nature he was to bruise the head of the serpent: his cunning, his poison, and all his power to hurt, lie in his head; when this is bruised, he is defeated. The battle to be fought was foretold, and the victory to be won was promised to Adam; and by faith in it, he and all the redeemed in the Old Testament conquered Satan. In the fulness of time God was manifest in the flesh: he came to destroy the works of the devil. Sin is his great work; by it he drew man from God, and by it he keeps man from God. Emmanuel began the destruction of the works of the devil by taking human nature. His manhood was perfectly holy—it had not, it could not have any sin; because God was in Christ. There was every thing in his holy life which the law could require. He obeyed all its precepts with uninterrupted conformity; and, being co-equal and co-eternal with the Father, his obedience was therefore Divine, absolutely complete, and infinitely sufficient to justify for ever. He was tempted, indeed, but he overcame every temptation. He defeated Satan in all his attempts, insomuch, that when he was entering on the last scene of his life, he could declare—"The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me." He did come, and the great pitched battle was fought, which was to decide for ever, whether the seed of the woman or the serpent should be crowned conqueror. The battle began in the garden of Gethsemane, and was finished upon

I was fit for nothing but the fire, and thou hast brought me into the vineyard of red wine, and hast enabled me to trust in that blood of the Lamb which cheereth God and man. On this my soul lives, and is refreshed: and being through grace *in* him, and living *upon* him, I bless thee, Holy Father, for thy faithful promise to keep me unto the end. I am still an easy prey to all those who seek the hurt of my soul; but thou hast given me thy word, that, lest any hurt me, thou wilt keep me night and day. I confess, gracious God, that I have dishonoured thee by doubting of thy love, and by questioning its unchangeableness, but now I believe that fury is not in thee to any one branch in the true vine. There is love, and nothing but love, in all thy dealings with Christ, and with his. Forgive my guilty fears and suspicions of thy forsaking me, arising from my weakness, and from the strength of mine enemies: I now see that thou canst as easily consume them as fire can briers and thorns. Lord, increase my faith in thy promised strength, that I may lay hold of it for peace, and may keep fast hold of it for maintaining peace with thee always and by all means. O grant me this, my good God, that my faith may work more by love. Let me take deeper root in Jesus, and grow up more into him, blossoming, and budding, and flourishing in his vineyard. I depend upon thee to keep me a branch in him, and to make me a fruitful branch, bringing forth plentifully the fruits of righteousness, which are by Christ Jesus to the glory and praise of God. I believe the work is thine—thou hast begun it—and thou wilt carry it on until the day of the Lord Jesus. Thou art faith-

ful to thy word and work. In dependence upon thy faithfulness, I hope to persevere. Let it be done unto me according to thy promises, wherein thou hast caused me to put my trust. Hear, Lord, and answer, for thy mercies' sake in Jesus, to whom, with thee and the Eternal Spirit, Three Persons in one Godhead, be equal glory and praise, for ever and ever. Amen.

CHAPTER XV.

The Believer finishes his Course, and enters into Rest.

THE believer is now happily arrived at the verge of life. Goodness and mercy have followed him all his days, and will not lose their glory by forsaking him at the close of them. It is appointed unto all men once to die, and his fixed time is at hand. This body is returning to dust, and the spirit must appear before the throne of God. In this trying hour he trusts to the principles which had carried him through life, and he finds them a perfect preservative from the fear and from the power of death. The same faith in a reconciled God and loving Father, keeps peace in his conscience, and love in his heart. He depends upon the atonement of Emmanuel, and is safe: he wraps himself up in the robe of Emmanuel's righteousness, and is happy. He knows he shall be found in Jesus, when he stands before God; and therefore he looks upon death as his friend, and meets it with a hope full of glory and immortality.

This is the privilege of believers in Jesus. They die in peace. Their principles are mighty, through God, to support and comfort them in the hour of death. Reader, are these principles thine? Examine carefully. Come to a point in this matter; for it is of infinite and eternal moment. What is thy state? Art thou prepared to die? Perhaps thou art openly profane. And what wilt thou do upon thy death-bed, when the divine law accuses thee, justice condemns thee, and the terrors of hell take hold of thee? The stings of guilt, at such a time, will be worse in the conscience than all the tortures that thy sick body can possibly feel. But if thy conscience be asleep—O what a dreadful death! if thou go out of the world with thine eyes shut, and open them not till thou find the flames of hell about thee!

Perhaps thou art not afraid, because thou hast a decent outside: O take care of trusting in thyself, lest thou shouldst have thy portion with the openly profane. If thou make what thou art, or hast, any ground of thy hope before God—if thou depend on thy duties or righteousness, or join them with the work of Christ, and meet death in this confidence—how dreadful will be thy mistake! how inevitable thy ruin! Such false hopes are thus described: "Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, and compass yourselves about with sparks, walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled"—but mind the end—thus saith the Lord: "This shall ye have of mine hand, ye shall lie down in sorrow." And together with them will the open enemy of God and his Christ lie down. A denier of revelation is

brought to the bed of languishing—a slow lingering distemper is carrying him off—the physician has given him over—his disease is mortal, and he is convinced of it: but, alas! he has no preparation for death and judgment. He has some Christian friends, and they talk freely to him about his eternal state, but he will hear nothing of his guilt, or of his want of a Saviour. They get a minister of Christ to visit him, and he speaks to him of sin, which is the transgression of the holy law; and of the justice of God, which is engaged to give transgressors their due; and of the impossibility of his finding mercy at the judgment-seat, until every demand be satisfied, which law and justice have upon him: he tries to persuade the dying man of the Godhead of Jesus, and of the divine work of Jesus, but in vain. He sets at nought the minister's advice, and with a hardened and impenitent heart replies—'Be it as it will with me in eternity, I'll have nothing to do with your Christ.' So he died. We need not follow him to the judgment-seat, to know what became of his soul. The infallible record has declared what will be the portion of the unbelieving. Their misery is as certain as the truth of God. O reader, examine thyself; for he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God.

Perhaps thou art in name a Christian; but what thinkest thou of Christ? The grand heresy of this day is about his person; and if thou art fallen into it, there is no hope in thy death. Is he Jehovah? O leave not this matter undetermined. The truth of his word, and the glory of his work, depend en-

tirely upon this one point: so do thy peace and comfort; for if thou believe him to be any thing but the self-existent God, thou shalt die in thy sins. His sufferings cannot avail for thy pardon, nor his obedience for thy righteousness, unless he be Jehovah. Without faith in him, as the self-existent Saviour, death will find thee under guilt, and judgment will leave thee among the enemies of God and his Christ.

Whatever evil there is in death to terrify, whatever pain to hurt, the blessed Jesus, by the grace of God, tasted it for all his. The grace of the Father gave him to be the surety for his people unto death. He died for them and as truly tasted death as ever the nicest palate tasted meat or drink. But it was like a taste—of short duration—it was not possible that he should be holden long under the bands of death. He rose again on the third day; and because he lives, believers in him shall live also. They are partakers of his victory over death, and share in all its blessings. The sentence of the broken law is repealed. They do not die to bear the punishment of sin. Christ sustained that. The pains and agonies of death fell upon him: "The sorrows of death," says he, "compassed me, and the pains of hell got hold upon me." He was a just man, who had no reason to fear death: but being found in the place of his people, with their sins upon him, he was to bear every thing that was dreadful in death. Hence his agonies at the approach of it: "My heart," says he, "is sore pained within me, and the terrors of death are fallen upon me: fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror hath overwhelmed me." He endured those inconceivable horrors, to

warfare, and every thing needful for it is from thee. From thy fulness I expect it; and when I receive it I would use it to thy glory. Hear, Lord, and answer me, for thy mercies' sake. Amen, and amen.

CHAPTER XIV.

The Believer, kept by the Power of God, perseveres in his holy Walk and victorious Warfare.

After the believer has made a great progress in his walk, and has been very successful in his warfare, yet he is not out of the reach of any temptation. He is still liable to be stopped in the way of duty. His enemies may cheat him by some stratagem, or gain some advantage over him by open force. While he is attending to these things as they come before him in his daily experience, a thought will often arise—

I am afraid my profession will at last come to nothing, and I shall be a cast-away. I feel so much corruption working in my duties, and my heart is so ready to revolt and to turn from the Lord in every battle, that I cannot help being uneasy about my final state. How can I? it is not in me to hold out and persevere against so much opposition from within and without. What signifies my resolution to walk forward, or to fight for an uncertain crown? I think I gain no ground. My own carnal will plagues me, and I love ease and quiet as much as ever. My corruptions seem as many, and mine enemies as strong as they were. One day, I fear, I shall perish by

their hands. My heart faints at the thought—my courage fails me. O wretched man that I am!—where, to whom shall I look for strength, to enable me to hold out unto the end?

No believer is absolutely free from such an attack; and there are seasons very favourable to it. If his mind be in heaviness through manifold temptations, and be reasoning legally upon them; if he be under the hidings of the Lord's countenance, or in a time of desertion; if he be fallen into any great sin, perhaps his old besetting sin; if the guilt of it be upon his conscience, and the indignation of God be heavy upon him: then such thoughts find easy admittance; and if they be indulged, they greatly distress the believer; for they directly assault his faith, and strike at the very being of his hope. As these graces are weakened, he moves slowly; and if unbelief prevail, there is a stop put to his progress in the heavenly road.

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who has made ample provision for victory over this temptation. The principles before insisted on are now to be brought into practice. Here is a fresh occasion to try their power and influence, and to make it appear that in these distressing circumstances the Father has given his children good ground to rely upon his unchangeable love. He has revealed to them the immutability of his counsel and of his oath, that when they have fled to Jesus for refuge, they may comfort their hearts, and say—I have been afraid of falling away, but it is without reason; for I have still immutable things to trust in—although to my sense and feeling, every thing seems to make against me, yet God

has promised not to leave me nor forsake me. O that I may honour his promise, and without doubting rely upon his faithful arm to make it good!

Consider then, O my soul, the principles of the doctrine of Christ. Review them carefully. Thou seest what influence they have upon every step of thy walk, and how mighty they are, through God, to carry thee through all thy difficulties. O study, then, the perfect freeness and the absolute sufficiency of the salvation of Jesus. Read and mark the bonds and securities which a faithful God has given thee to trust in, and not to be afraid. The time to honour them most, is to believe them when thou hast the least sensible evidence; for that is the strongest faith. If thou canst believe upon his bare word, and it is a very good warrant, thy feet shall stand firm upon the rock, and thy goings shall be well ordered: and that thou mayest believe this in the hardest trials, God informs thee that thy continuance in grace does not depend on thyself. "Thou standest by faith;" and faith should direct thee to what God has undertaken and has promised to do for thee. He would have thee to place the confidence of thy heart upon his tried word, which is a never-failing foundation; and if thou wast to build all thy hopes of persevering upon it, it would quiet thy fears and comfort thy heart. Thou wouldst then see that God has not left thee to thyself to stand or fall, but has engaged never to leave thee nor forsake thee. He has declared he will not turn away from thee to do thee good, and he will put his fear into thy heart, and thou shalt not turn away from him. View thy case in this comfortable light, and while thou art

considering the safety of thy persevering, as revealed in Scripture for the ground of thy faith, may every promise lead thee to trust more in God, and to trust less to thyself, and then the snare which was laid for thee will be broken, and thou wilt be delivered.

But take heed of carrying thine opinions to Scripture, and of forcing it to speak for them. Beware of that common mistake; and beware of human systems. Pay no regard to men or names. Simply attend to the promises of God concerning thy persevering. Thy present trial has convinced thee, that thou canst not depend on thy own faithfulness: this, therefore, is the time to learn practically the faithfulness of God, and to improve thy faith in it from such Scripture arguments as these:—

First, The nature of the divine covenant, which is not only the unchangeable will of the Eternal Three, but is also their agreement, confirmed by oath, concerning the heirs of promise.

The Father loved them as his children, freely, with an everlasting love: he chose them, and gave them to his Son: he engaged to keep them by his power, through faith, unto salvation.

The Son accepted them, and wrote all their names in his book (not one of them, therefore, can be lost); he undertook to be made man, and to live and die for them; to rise from the dead, to ascend, and to intercede for them; and he sitteth as King Mediator upon the throne, till every one of them be brought to glory.

The Holy Spirit covenanted to carry into execution the purposes of the Father's love, and to apply the blessings of the Son's salvation. He undertook

to quicken the heirs of promise, to call them effectually, to guide, to strengthen, to sanctify, and to comfort them; yea, he is not to leave them, till the number of the elect be perfected. Therefore he abides with them for ever.

In this covenant the Eternal Three have undertaken, for every heir of promise, to do all for him, and all in him—for the means, and for the end; so that not one of them can perish: for faithfulness to the covenant is one of the highest honours of the Godhead: "I am Jehovah your Alehim, which keepeth covenant: I will ever be mindful of my covenant—My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that has gone out of my mouth." What strong consolation is there in these words! Study them, O my soul, that by them thy faith may be established, and they may do thee good, like a medicine.

Thou art afraid of falling away; but the blessed Trinity have undertaken to hold thee up, and their covenant engagements are to be the ground of thy believing, that they will fulfil what they have promised. Observe and adore the goodness of God: see how he meets thy doubts, and answers thine objections: "An oath for confirmation is among men an end of all strife: wherein God, willing more abundantly to show to the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge" to Jesus. Thy faith should run parallel with this promise, and should safely trust as far as it warrants thee: now it gives thee sufficient reason to conclude, that thy state be-

fore God is immutable, and that he has determined thou shalt not fall away and perish: for observe,

Secondly, His design in the covenant. He knew thy frame, thine infirmities, and thy temptations, and therefore he provided the covenant, and promised the blessings of it upon oath, for thy sake; to end all strife in thy conscience; and to give thee strong consolation. This was his mind and will. He revealed it for thee, to settle thy heart in believing, and to administer to thee great comfort. Weigh attentively each of these particulars, and then say, what more could have been done to satisfy thee of thine immutable persevering.

But thou thinkest, 'Such trials as thine are uncommon, and perhaps not provided for in the covenant; and therefore it can be no disparagement to the divine faithfulness, if thou shouldst fall away.' How can this be, since the everlasting covenant is ordered in all things, and on the part of God is absolutely sure?—nothing that concerns thee is left out of it; not a single hair of thy head: thy trials are all appointed and ordered, and the end also which they are to answer.

Perhaps, from the clear evidence of the divine record, thou art convinced of the covenant of God to save the heirs of promise, and of his engaging to keep them that they shall never perish; but thou art afraid thou art not in the covenant, nor an heir of promise. From whence arise thy fears? From Scripture? No: all Scripture is on thy side. Hast thou not fled, as a poor sinner, to Jesus for refuge? Hast thou not acknowledged his divine nature, and his all-sufficient work? And though thou art now

tempted to doubt, yet some faith is still fighting against unbelief? These are covenant blessings. O look up then to Jesus—why not thy Jesus? But, however, look to him—keep looking on—and he will give thee reason to be ashamed of thy doubts and fears.

But the Lord hides himself from me, and therefore I fear I am not in his favour. This objection is answered in the charter of grace—"I will not turn away from doing thee good." He has hidden his face, and thou art troubled: this trouble is for good. It should put thee upon inquiring into the reason for God's hiding himself. It should humble thee, and should exercise thy faith upon such a scripture as this: "For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him: I hid me, and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart: I have seen his ways and will heal him; I will lead him also, and will restore comforts to him and to his mourners." Although he hid himself, yet he had love to his people: although he smote them, yet it was with a fatherly correction. But

Thou fearest God not only hides his face, but has also quite forsaken thee—He may, as to thy sense and feeling, but not as to his own purpose, which changeth not. Hear how he speaks to thee, and silences thy doubts: "For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee: in a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer." How gracious is thy God! What infinite mercy is it, that he should give thee such promises, so suited to

the trials of thy faith, to preserve thee under them, and to bring thee out of them! Read carefully, over and over again, these promises; and may every reading of them disperse the cloud of unbelief, until thy soul be enlivened with the light of the Lord's loving countenance.

But perhaps thou art in a worse case as to thine own apprehension: Thou thinkest, 'God is incensed against me, and justly—he has cast me off, and I can expect no more favour at his hand: once, indeed, I thought he loved me, but I have fallen into a great sin—an old besetting sin—my conscience accuses me of committing it against light and conviction—it is a foul black spot, such as is not to be found upon the children of God.'

Thou art fallen: and wilt thou lie there, and not be raised up again? Thou art under guilt: and wilt thou nurse it, and add sin to sin? Aggravate the sinfulness of thy fall as much as thou wilt, yet thou canst not be truly humbled for it, but by returning to God, and by trusting in the plenteous redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Then thy heart will be softened and melted into love, for grace will have its due honour, and thou wilt see what the Scripture says of thy case, in its divine truth and majesty. Thou wilt feel thyself exactly what the word of God says of thee—a fallen sinful creature: in thee (that is, in thy flesh) dwelleth no good thing; so that there is not any sin but thou art capable of falling into it, through the strength of temptation. So long as thou art in the body, the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: in this conflict thou mayest fall, but the

covenant secures thee from perishing. Abraham, the father of the faithful, fell—the friend of God fell into the same sin again and again. Moses fell: so did David. Peter, forewarned, fell: so did all the apostles. Yet they were believers, and they recovered themselves out of the snare of the devil. For whatever sin thou art fallen into may be pardoned, as theirs was. "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin"—there is in it an infinite virtue to wash away every spot and stain—it is a public fountain—it stands open for daily use, that believers may wash and be clean—it is always, at every given moment, effectual—it cleanseth, in the present tense, now—to day, while it is called to-day; for there is nothing new to be suffered on the part of Christ, in order to take away sin. He put it away by the sacrifice of himself: the Father accepted it, and thus proclaims the free forgiveness of all the trespasses for which the atonement was made: "I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." Why dost thou reject the comfort of this promise? It is suited to thy present distress, and is the remedy for it. Thou art fallen into unrighteousness: God says, I will be merciful to it. Thou art fallen into sins and iniquities: he says, I will remember them no more. Thou mayest remember thy fall, but let it be in order to rise from it by faith. It should teach thee thy need of the blood of the Lamb. It should bring thee to sprinkle it afresh upon thy conscience, and to live safe and happy under the protection of it. Thus apply it to thy fall, and thou wilt repent aright; thou wilt be truly humbled and made more watchful.

Thou wilt live more by faith in thy covenant God, wilt glorify more the infinitely perfect salvation of Jesus, and wilt be more dependent upon the grace and keeping of the eternal Spirit.

Consider then, O my soul, the rich, abounding, superabounding grace of thy God, in making such a provision for raising thee up when fallen into sin. He intended the promises in the covenant should be the means of thy recovery, as they give thee good ground still to trust in a covenant God, and in his immutable counsel and oath. O lie not then in guilt—rest not in unbelief—give not place to the devil. The Lord has put words into thy mouth—may he help thee, in the faith of thy heart, to take them up and say, "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me. I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause, and execute judgment for me: he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness." If the Lord open to thee the rich treasury of grace in this scripture, and enable thee to depend on the ample security here given for raising thee from thy fall, then consider, in the

Third place, The express promises made in the covenant, that the believer shall not perish, but shall have everlasting life. These promises are not conditional, made to the believer upon certain terms, as if upon doing his part God would do his also; for he does not stand by his own will, or strength, or faithfulness; he does not hold out to the end by his own diligence and watchfulness in means, or receive the

crown of glory as the merited reward of any works of righteousness done by him: the promises are all of free grace, not dependent on man's will, but on God's; not yea and nay, but of absolutely certain fulfilment. They were all made in the covenant to Christ the head, and are already made good to Christ, as the head, for the use of his members—"For all the promises of God are in him, Yea, and in him, Amen." He was given for the covenant of his people, and as such he undertook to do all their works for them and in them, and therefore all the promised blessings of the covenant are laid up in his fulness—"in him they are Yea"—and laid up, as the head has the fulness of the senses, for the use of his members—"in him they are Amen." He communicates the promised blessings freely, not conditionally; by believing, and not for working: "Therefore," says the apostle, speaking of Christ's righteousness, "it is of faith, that it might be by grace, to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed."

In this sovereign manner and style runs the covenant, and every promise in it—"I will be their God:" of mine own mere motion and grace, and according to the good pleasure of mine own will—"and they shall be my people:" my will shall make them willing in the day of my power; for I will work in them both to will and do: yea, "I will be a Father unto them, and they shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." The word FATHER relates to his children, and expresses the unchangeable love of his heart towards them: it is a dear covenant name, and denotes the inseparable connexion between him and

his children: whenever they hear it, it should always excite in them an idea of his everlasting affection. He loves his family as a Father, and loves every one of them with the same almighty love. He cannot change. He cannot cease to be a Father, and they cannot cease to be his children. His name is a security to them that they cannot perish; for if one of them could, they all might. And then his covenant purpose to bring many sons unto glory would be defeated—his relation to them as a Father would be broken—he would be a Father without children—he would deny them the promised blessings—he would forget to be gracious to them—his will concerning them would change, or would be overruled by some opposite will—and his great plan in the covenant would come to nothing. But these things cannot possibly be. He is the Father of his children, and he has engaged, by promise and oath, to love, to bless, and to keep them for ever. Out of perfect love he gave them to his Son, who undertook to be their Saviour: he came and was made man, Jehovah incarnate, to live and die for them. He was so delighted with them (for he has all their names written in his book) and with the work, that he was straitened till it was accomplished. Blessings on him for ever! it is finished. The royal Saviour is upon the throne, almighty to save his dear redeemed. He would lose his name, which is above every name; the honours of his salvation would fade away upon his head, and the glories of his offices would come to nothing, if one, whom Jesus lived and died to save, should perish. But it is not possible. Whom he loves, he loves unto the end. "I give

unto them," says he, "eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." They are his seed—and it was covenanted that he should see his seed. They are the travail of his soul—and he shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied. How can he be satisfied if any one of them should be lost? He prayed—"Holy Father, keep, through thine own name, those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are one." And the Father always heard him. He prayed that they might be with him where he is, to see his glory: and the Holy Spirit covenanted to bring them to it—he undertook, as his name *Spirit* imports, to breathe life into them, to call, to convert them, to keep them, and to give them every thing needful for their spiritual life. How can they fail of coming to glory, being thus kept for it by the power of God? The Holy Spirit would lose his name, *Spirit*, or breath of life, and his office, which is to abide with, and to dwell for ever in, the elect people of God, if any one of them should die from God, and perish. Thus there is full security given by the names and offices of the Trinity, that believers shall be kept from falling away. The Father cannot be without his children. The glory of Jesus would fade away, if one of his redeemed was plucked out of his hand. The divine honours of the Spirit of life would be eclipsed, if he was to forsake his charge, and suffer any of the redeemed to fall into hell. But these things cannot be. The will of the Father, Son, and Spirit, is the same concerning the salvation of the elect, which is as secure as covenant bonds and oaths can make it.

Art thou then, O my soul, established in this great truth? Dost thou yield to the power of the evidence which the blessed Trinity have vouchsafed to give thee? Meditate carefully upon it for the growth of thy faith. Search the Scriptures, and observe how clearly God declares his fixed purpose to keep his people, and to hold them up unto the end. The great preacher of the gospel in the Old Testament church, speaks thus of the unchangeable will of a covenant God: "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee." A great preacher in the New Testament church has confirmed the same precious truth. He is treating of the golden chain of salvation, and showing how inseparable every link of it is; and in this prospect he triumphs: "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loveth us." By the mouth of these two infallible witnesses the truth is established—they depose that the covenant is immutable, and that nothing can separate believers from the love wherewith God loves them in his Son. O most comfortable doctrine! How encouraging is it, in any undertaking, to set about it with certain hope of success! How ani-

mating in our Christian walk, how reviving in the dark and difficult path of it, to have God's promise that he will keep us, and bring us to a happy end! How pleasing is it to go on by faith in our warfare, casting all our care upon him who careth for us! How delightful is it to trust his promise, and daily to find it made good: "Ye are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto eternal salvation." Here, O my soul, thou art to seek for strong consolation amidst the trials and difficulties of thy walk. Thou art afraid of falling—God has engaged to hold thee up. Thou hast been tempted to think thou shouldst fall quite away, and come to nothing—but God says, thou art preserved in Christ Jesus. His covenant and oath are made to confirm the faith of thy persevering. Thou standest by faith, and thy faith should lead thee to rest safely on what God says about thy standing: and for thy faith itself, its continuing, its increasing, thou hast his infallible faithfulness to depend upon. Thou art weak—but he keeps thee by his power. Thine enemies are strong—but none of them shall pluck thee out of his hand. Thou art willing to join them, and to depart from the living God—but he has promised to put his fear into thy heart, and thou shalt not depart from him. He meets with thy doubts, and answers all thine objections in a word—for he hath said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

Be of good courage then, O my soul, and go forward, strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, and he will bring thee safe to the end of thy journey. He has promised it. Put thyself into his hands, and give him the glory of keeping thee.

He will hold up thy goings in his paths, that thy footsteps slip not. The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil. The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in, from this time forth, and even for evermore. How then canst thou miscarry, safe under his guidance and keeping? Commit thy ways unto the Lord. Do it simply. Look up by faith to his promise, and then lean on his arm. Thus going on thou mayest rejoice at every step in the Lord thy God. He has left thee a sweet hymn upon the subject, with which the weary travellers to Sion have often refreshed their spirits. Take it up, and sing it after them. Study it. Mix faith with it: and, with perfect reliance on what God, who cannot lie, has promised in it to do for thee, sing and make melody with it in thy heart unto the Lord—

"In that day sing ye unto her, A vineyard of red wine. I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day. Fury is not in me: who would set the briers and thorns against me in battle? I would go through them, I would burn them together. Or will he take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me? then he shall make peace with me. He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root: Israel shall blossom and bud, and shall fill the face of the world with fruit."

O my good God and faithful Keeper, I do believe these precious promises; help my unbelief. Forgive my distrusting thy faithfulness, and enable me steadfastly to rely upon it for the future. What return can I make unto thee for grafting me into the true vine? O Lord, this love surpasseth knowledge.

I was fit for nothing but the fire, and thou hast brought me into the vineyard of red wine, and hast enabled me to trust in that blood of the Lamb which cheereth God and man. On this my soul lives, and is refreshed: and being through grace *in* him, and living *upon* him, I bless thee, Holy Father, for thy faithful promise to keep me unto the end. I am still an easy prey to all those who seek the hurt of my soul; but thou hast given me thy word, that, lest any hurt me, thou wilt keep me night and day. I confess, gracious God, that I have dishonoured thee by doubting of thy love, and by questioning its unchangeableness, but now I believe that fury is not in thee to any one branch in the true vine. There is love, and nothing but love, in all thy dealings with Christ, and with his. Forgive my guilty fears and suspicions of thy forsaking me, arising from my weakness, and from the strength of mine enemies: I now see that thou canst as easily consume them as fire can briers and thorns. Lord, increase my faith in thy promised strength, that I may lay hold of it for peace, and may keep fast hold of it for maintaining peace with thee always and by all means. O grant me this, my good God, that my faith may work more by love. Let me take deeper root in Jesus, and grow up more into him, blossoming, and budding, and flourishing in his vineyard. I depend upon thee to keep me a branch in him, and to make me a fruitful branch, bringing forth plentifully the fruits of righteousness, which are by Christ Jesus to the glory and praise of God. I believe the work is thine—thou hast begun it—and thou wilt carry it on until the day of the Lord Jesus. Thou art faith-

ful to thy word and work. In dependence upon thy faithfulness, I hope to persevere. Let it be done unto me according to thy promises, wherein thou hast caused me to put my trust. Hear, Lord, and answer, for thy mercies' sake in Jesus, to whom, with thee and the Eternal Spirit, Three Persons in one Godhead, be equal glory and praise, for ever and ever. Amen.

CHAPTER XV.

The Believer finishes his Course, and enters into Rest.

THE believer is now happily arrived at the verge of life. Goodness and mercy have followed him all his days, and will not lose their glory by forsaking him at the close of them. It is appointed unto all men once to die, and his fixed time is at hand. This body is returning to dust, and the spirit must appear before the throne of God. In this trying hour he trusts to the principles which had carried him through life, and he finds them a perfect preservative from the fear and from the power of death. The same faith in a reconciled God and loving Father, keeps peace in his conscience, and love in his heart. He depends upon the atonement of Emmanuel, and is safe: he wraps himself up in the robe of Emmanuel's righteousness, and is happy. He knows he shall be found in Jesus, when he stands before God; and therefore he looks upon death as his friend, and meets it with a hope full of glory and immortality.

This is the privilege of believers in Jesus. They die in peace. Their principles are mighty, through God, to support and comfort them in the hour of death. Reader, are these principles thine? Examine carefully. Come to a point in this matter; for it is of infinite and eternal moment. What is thy state? Art thou prepared to die? Perhaps thou art openly profane. And what wilt thou do upon thy death-bed, when the divine law accuses thee, justice condemns thee, and the terrors of hell take hold of thee? The stings of guilt, at such a time, will be worse in the conscience than all the tortures that thy sick body can possibly feel. But if thy conscience be asleep—O what a dreadful death! if thou go out of the world with thine eyes shut, and open them not till thou find the flames of hell about thee!

Perhaps thou art not afraid, because thou hast a decent outside: O take care of trusting in thyself, lest thou shouldst have thy portion with the openly profane. If thou make what thou art, or hast, any ground of thy hope before God—if thou depend on thy duties or righteousness, or join them with the work of Christ, and meet death in this confidence—how dreadful will be thy mistake! how inevitable thy ruin! Such false hopes are thus described: "Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, and compass yourselves about with sparks, walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled"—but mind the end—thus saith the Lord: "This shall ye have of mine hand, ye shall lie down in sorrow." And together with them will the open enemy of God and his Christ lie down. A denier of revelation is

brought to the bed of languishing—a slow lingering distemper is carrying him off—the physician has given him over—his disease is mortal, and he is convinced of it: but, alas! he has no preparation for death and judgment. He has some Christian friends, and they talk freely to him about his eternal state, but he will hear nothing of his guilt, or of his want of a Saviour. They get a minister of Christ to visit him, and he speaks to him of sin, which is the transgression of the holy law; and of the justice of God, which is engaged to give transgressors their due; and of the impossibility of his finding mercy at the judgment-seat, until every demand be satisfied, which law and justice have upon him: he tries to persuade the dying man of the Godhead of Jesus, and of the divine work of Jesus, but in vain. He sets at nought the minister's advice, and with a hardened and impenitent heart replies—'Be it as it will with me in eternity, I'll have nothing to do with your Christ.' So he died. We need not follow him to the judgment-seat, to know what became of his soul. The infallible record has declared what will be the portion of the unbelieving. Their misery is as certain as the truth of God. O reader, examine thyself; for he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God.

Perhaps thou art in name a Christian; but what thinkest thou of Christ? The grand heresy of this day is about his person; and if thou art fallen into it, there is no hope in thy death. Is he Jehovah? O leave not this matter undetermined. The truth of his word, and the glory of his work, depend en-

tirely upon this one point: so do thy peace and comfort; for if thou believe him to be any thing but the self-existent God, thou shalt die in thy sins. His sufferings cannot avail for thy pardon, nor his obedience for thy righteousness, unless he be Jehovah. Without faith in him, as the self-existent Saviour, death will find thee under guilt, and judgment will leave thee among the enemies of God and his Christ.

Whatever evil there is in death to terrify, whatever pain to hurt, the blessed Jesus, by the grace of God, tasted it for all his. The grace of the Father gave him to be the surety for his people unto death. He died for them and as truly tasted death as ever the nicest palate tasted meat or drink. But it was like a taste—of short duration—it was not possible that he should be holden long under the bands of death. He rose again on the third day; and because he lives, believers in him shall live also. They are partakers of his victory over death, and share in all its blessings. The sentence of the broken law is repealed. They do not die to bear the punishment of sin. Christ sustained that. The pains and agonies of death fell upon him: "The sorrows of death," says he, "compassed me, and the pains of hell got hold upon me." He was a just man, who had no reason to fear death: but being found in the place of his people, with their sins upon him, he was to bear every thing that was dreadful in death. Hence his agonies at the approach of it: "My heart," says he, "is sore pained within me, and the terrors of death are fallen upon me: fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror hath overwhelmed me." He endured those inconceivable horrors, to

deliver them, who, through fear of death, had been all their lifetime subject to bondage. But the bondage is at an end when they believe in his victory. Their fears are dispelled, when they see the glory of the battle which he fought and won;—how by dying he took away sin, satisfied justice, removed the curse, conquered death, broke its sceptre, took out its sting, and left nothing in it but what was friendly to them. In these believing views they can meet death with confidence: for they cannot taste that in death which Christ tasted. He felt it, that they might not feel it: he died in agonies, that they might die in peace. O my most loving and precious Jesus, I believe this: let not any unbelief in me dishonour thy complete conquest over all that is fearful or painful in dying. My times are in thy hand: when thou art pleased to bring them to an end, let me find death swallowed up in victory. O that I may then triumph with thy redeemed. What can separate us from the love of Christ—shall the sting of death or the fear of death, or of Satan or of hell? No; thanks be to God, these were all conquered when Jesus died; subdued for ever when he rose again. And he has left us many precious promises, that we, trusting in him, shall share in his victory, and find the blessings of it in the hour of death.

Attend then, O my soul, to what he has engaged to bestow upon his dying disciples, as the fruit of his death; and give him credit, not doubting but he will make it good. Live now in the comfort of his promises, and fear not. The almighty Jesus will be with thee, and thou shalt conquer with him in the hour of death. Observe his word, which cannot be

broken—"I will ransom them from the power of the grave, I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plague; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes." The ransom which he here engages to pay for his, he paid as their surety, and he daily applies it to them, as their Saviour. Upon quoting this promise, and finding, by faith, the happy fulfilment of it, mark how the apostle rejoices with the Corinthians in the near view of death: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law: but thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through Jesus Christ our Lord." O thou most glorious conqueror, almighty Jesus, eternal thanks be to thee, that the law cannot accuse, sin cannot condemn, death cannot sting thy redeemed. Thou hast promised to make them happy in death, and faithful is thy word. The beloved John is one of thy witnesses: "I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord:" Write it for the use of my disciples, that it may be the ground of their faith when they come to die: I promise to make them blessed in their death; being IN me, members under me their Head, and living IN the Lord, they shall die IN the Lord: they shall have union with me, and communion too, when they are dying: the hour of death, the time of their dissolution, shall be a season of great blessedness; they shall have my presence in their last moments: I will walk with them through the valley of the shadow of death, and they shall fear no evil; my rod and my staff shall then comfort them.—O my God, make thy word good.

Sweet Jesus, write this promise upon my heart. O help me to mix faith with it, that when mine appointed time is come, I may experience the blessedness of dying in the Lord. I wait for the time, it is not far off. O keep me, Jesus, till that hour; keep me, Jesus, in that hour. Save me through life and death, and bless me with thine eternal salvation. Hear and answer, for thy mercies' sake. Amen.

Meditate, O my soul, upon these blessings. Consider how great, how many they are. Consider also thine unworthiness. Thou art less than the least of them: and yet God has set his love upon thee, and has given thee the greatest of them. He has called thee to the knowledge of his love in Jesus, and has shed it abroad in thy heart. He has set thee in the way that leads to the eternal enjoyment of his love, has promised to keep thee all the way, and to bless thee at the end of it. He will make thee blessed in death, and blessed for evermore. Hitherto thou hast found him faithful. Not one good thing has failed which thou didst ask in faith, and wait for at his hands. Review all his dealings with thee, and see what infinite mercy there was in them. He made thy walk prosperous, thy warfare successful, thy crosses sanctified. Thou hast not taken a false step, but when thou wast not living by the faith of the Son of God. O trust him then, and be not afraid. His love has brought thee thus far: he has led thee in the right way to the verge of life, and he declares he will not leave thee nor forsake thee in the hour of death. Fear not to look down, fear not to go down with Jesus into the grave. He has promised, "I will be with thee;" and wherever he is, there is hea-

ven. He is with his dying friends, and they are blessed indeed. They die in faith; they live by faith in death; and as soon as faith ceases, they live with their God for ever. The body falls asleep, and rests safely till the morning of the resurrection. The soul in a moment enters into the joy of its Lord: a joy like his—pure and holy; a fulness of joy—every sense has its proper object, enjoys it, and is satisfied for ever. O what will the heart feel in this blessedness! What acknowledgments will it make to God and the Lamb! To praise him for the wonders of his grace, in bringing to that glory, will be the happy employment of eternity. To see him as he is, in his divine majesty, is heaven. For how great communications of his love the being ever with him, and ever like him, will make the soul capable of, we cannot perfectly conceive. These things are at present too high and heavenly, even for our thoughts. By faith we sometimes have a little glimpse of the glory to be revealed, and it eclipses all the grandeur of the world. There are happy moments, when we are permitted to behold the King in his beauty, when he discovers his matchless loveliness, and gives us a taste of the heavenly feast: at such blessed seasons the soul is bowed down and humbled to the dust, adoring the infinite mercy and goodness of God. If there be so much of heaven in these manifestations of divine love, what must the full enjoyment be? We may suppose a happy soul entered into rest, thus meditating upon the grace which brought it to that glory:—

Blessing and thanks without ceasing, be unto Father, Son, and Spirit, through whose sovereign grace I was chosen to this blessedness, and am now

brought to the perfect and everlasting enjoyment of it. This communion with the Godhead, through Jesus, is as far beyond my former thoughts of it, as the heaven is above the earth: how great is his goodness, and how great is his beauty, that the most High and Holy One would thus communicate his love unto sinful creatures! Glory be to thee, Holy Father, for predestinating me to the adoption of children, and for the free gift of the heavenly inheritance. Glory be to thee, incarnate Jehovah, for thy covenant undertakings for me—for thy life, death, and complete salvation. I worship thee, I glorify thee, O God the Holy Ghost, for quickening me, for teaching me, and enabling me, through believing in Jesus, to experience the love of the Father, and for bringing me to enjoy his endless blessings. Surely the goodness and mercy of the Holy Trinity have followed me all the days of my life; were with me when I walked through the valley of the shadow of death; and are now my most blessed portion in the house of the Lord. I am made a pillar in the temple of my God, and am to go no more out. O what exceeding riches of grace are these! What has God done for me! Angels and brethren, help me to praise. My debt is immense. No saved sinner can owe him more: it is growing every moment. My praises pay none of it. With my thankful heart, and it is all thankfulness, I only acknowledge his infinite goodness, and own myself his eternal debtor. Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever!

Reader, art thou in the way which leads to this glory? If not, may the Lord be merciful unto thee, and bring thee *unto it.*

If thou art seeking to be set right in it, remember Jesus is THE WAY. May his good Spirit enable thee to believe in his word, and to trust in it, till thou attain the salvation of thy soul!

If thou art in the way, and hast communion with the Father, through faith in the atonement and righteousness of his Son, art thou maintaining it in thy daily walk, and improving it in every duty? And art thou going on thy way rejoicing in God? If thou art sorrowing for outward crosses, or burdened with inward conflicts, canst thou nevertheless find joy and peace in believing? Dost thou march on victorious in thy warfare, keeping up communion with God against all opposition of thy spiritual enemies? And is thy faith established upon the faithfulness of God, that he will carry on his own work in thee unto the day of the Lord Jesus? In this faith art thou now living? And in this faith dost thou hope to die? Has God indeed done these wonders for thee? O bless him then with me, and let us magnify his name together. Be thou exalted, Lord, in us and by us. Every day we would grow up into nearer and holier communion with thee. We desire to be more like thee, and to show forth more of thy lovely image before men. O help us to praise thee better with our lips and lives. By the communion of the Holy Ghost we would communicate more by faith with the Son in his salvation, and with the Father in his love. O holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, in this divine fellowship we hope to find our heaven upon earth: let it be growing and increasing, helped forward by all means, and, if it please thee, by this volume. Make it, Lord, the instrument under thee,

of leading thy people into the right way, and of establishing them in it. Accompany the reading of it with the teaching of thy Spirit, and to the advancement of thy glory. I present the book unto thee, ever-glorious Jesus, and lay it at thy feet. Thou knowest my heart: accept it graciously, as a public acknowledgment for inestimable mercies. In thy great compassion overlook the faults in it: what is agreeable to the Scripture is thine own. Make use of it to thy praise. I devote myself, my body and soul, my tongue and pen, all I have and am, to thy service. I would not look upon myself as any longer mine own; but, being bought with a price, I would glorify thee in the use of all thy gifts and graces. With thee I desire to walk through life. In thine arms I hope to die. Through thee I expect soon to enjoy perfect communion with the Father and the Spirit: therefore, into thy hands I commend myself. Keep me in the right way. Guide me to the end of it, that I may finish my course with joy, and join thy redeemed in giving to thee, with the Father and the Spirit, the Three in one Jehovah, equal and everlasting praise. Hear, Lord, and answer! Amen.

THE

TRIUMPH OF FAITH.

things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." And then he prays, "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Ghost." And when the Holy Ghost gives it this blessed effect, he always fills the heart with gratitude and thankfulness. Thus it operated in the day when the believer was enabled to say, "O Lord, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou hast comforted me. Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation. Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the fountain of salvation." O what reviving cordials did the father of the faithful draw out of it! who against hope believed in hope, that he should become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken—"So shall thy seed be: and being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body, now dead, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb: he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God:" and being fully persuaded, that what he had promised he was able also to perform. For this heroic faith he is celebrated in Scripture, and proposed to us for an example. One of his children was enabled to follow the close steps of his faith, through a life of continual and great sufferings, and to triumph in the prospect of a violent death: "I am now ready to be offered up, and the time of my departure is at hand: I have fought a

tinued and increased with all the rich and ripe fruits of faith to the praise of the glory of the grace of God.

It has been long observed, and much lamented, that there are very few of these happy believers, who give such a perfect credit to the promises of God in Christ, as to rest their hearts upon his faithfulness, without any doubt or wavering. They do not trust so far as the promises warrant them, which stops the exercise of faith, and hinders the growth of the spiritual life. Weak faith has little fruit. Strong faith improves love to God, loving obedience, patient suffering, persevering warfare, and the other fruits of the Spirit. Indeed, for this very purpose it is commanded, that we might trust and not be afraid: and there are promises made to them who obey the command; and all things promised are possible to them who believe: for there is strength sufficient in the Promiser to make faith grow, yea, to make it grow exceedingly: and he has done it, giving us a happy instance in the church of the Thessalonians, in which persecution raged, but faith was victorious, and patience triumphant. It has pleased God to give us in the Scriptures many encouragements for the growth of faith, which are in the following Treatise set before the reader, that we may honour his word, and trust in it at all times, especially when appearances make against their being fulfilled. Then it is high worship, against hope to believe in hope, as the father of the faithful did: and they are his children, and follow the steps of his faith, who, when sin is felt in its defilement, in its guilt, in the sense of inward corruptions, and of strong temptations, in the many troubles of life, in the infirmities of age, and in the

approach of death, put their whole trust and confidence in the promise of God. Nothing else is appointed, either to bring in the peace of God to the conscience, or to keep it in. God only in such trials can be a safe refuge and a sure defence, and faith, looking at what he has engaged to give, secures the promised help to the glory of God. Under these several heads something is here offered from the Scriptures of truth, to encourage a more steadfast reliance on the divine faithfulness, than one commonly meets with. And what is said upon each head is here set before the reader on the authority of God's word, and is also followed with fervent prayer, that the end of publishing this Treatise may be answered; even that the scriptural faith may be hereby increased, that it may abound yet more and more, and in such a great degree, as may bring the highest glory to God, the truest holiness to the heart, and the happiest experience in the life, and in the welfare of the Christian. May the gracious Lord, who is the Author and Finisher of the faith, accompany it with his Spirit, to the advancement of his own praise, and to the edification of his own people. To Him who keepeth promise for ever, be glory in the church, through Christ Jesus, world without end. Amen.

THE

TRIUMPH OF FAITH.

CHAPTER I.

Introduction.

WHERE there has been war, a triumph supposes a battle to have been fought, a victory to have been obtained, and the great rejoicings of the conquerors upon this occasion. The Christian has his matter of triumph, but it is spiritual. It is always in Christ, the Captain of his salvation. So it is written—"Thanks be to God, who always causeth us to triumph in Christ." The apostle is speaking of his preaching the gospel. He carried the sweet savour of Jesus' name from place to place; but it was not always received as a joyful sound, nor welcomed as it deserved. He met with great opposition. The Holy Ghost witnessed, that in every city bonds and afflictions awaited him. As these abounded, grace did much more abound. For he was carried on through persecutions, imprisonment, stoning, whipping, perils of various kinds, suffered for Christ, and Christ made him victorious over them all. He not only enabled Paul to conquer, but also made him

more than conqueror: he was the blessed instrument of pulling down the strongholds of sin and Satan, and of setting up in the world that kingdom of Jesus which is flourishing to this day, and which will triumph to eternity. A poor weak man had all the Roman empire against him, but he did wonders. Through Christ strengthening him, he went on conquering and to conquer: and to Christ he gives all the glory; acknowledging that the gospel, his preaching it, and the success of it, was of God—the excellency of the power was of God: "Thanks be unto God, who always causeth us to triumph in Christ." He, for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate, that as our surety he might live, and die, and conquer for us. It was to the everlasting honour of his grace and mercy, that he would engage in this war, and undertake to deliver his people from the tyranny of their enemies. They were in bondage to sin—sold under sin—enslaved to divers lusts and pleasures—living according to the course of this world—according to the prince of the power of the air, the wicked spirit, who now worketh effectually in the children of disobedience. These tyrants were leading them captive at their will, hoping soon to have them delivered over to death, and then to everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. In this miserable state, under sin, under condemnation, we all were—guilty and helpless—not only without any means of deliverance in our own power, but without any desire of it; being tempted to dream of liberty, while we were tied and bound with the chain of our sins, and fancying that we were

free, even while our enemies were waiting to exercise their utmost malice against us, by binding us with chains of everlasting darkness. O what mercies—what compassions are in our God—in our Jesus! He remembered us in this our low estate, and manifested the exceeding riches of his grace, in coming from heaven to save his people from their sins. To this end Jehovah was manifested in the flesh, as it is written: "The children of Israel, and the children of Judah, were oppressed together; and all that took them captives held them fast, and refused to let them go: but their Redeemer is strong, the Lord of hosts is his name, he shall thoroughly plead their cause." He made all our enemies his own, and fought our battles against them. He obeyed, that the broken law which stood against us might be magnified by his obedience: the penalties of it he endured, when the Lord laid upon him the iniquities of us all. His cross was his triumphal chariot, on which he vanquished all our foes. He blotted out the hand-writing of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and he took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross: and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in that same cross. By dying on it, he put away sin by the sacrifice of himself; and by his rising from the dead on the third day, according to the Scriptures, he overcame death, and him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. And now, as God-man in one Christ, the almighty Saviour of his redeemed, he is seated upon his throne of grace: all his enemies being made his footstool, he is able to save to the utter-

most all that come unto God by him. Such was the battle which the Redeemer fought. Such was the victory which he obtained. The important news of it is the substance of that blessed gospel which he ordered his apostles to preach to every creature, and which he promised to assist them in, and to be with them for that purpose, to the end of the world. He is as good as his word to this day. Still faith cometh by hearing it. The Holy Spirit witnesses to it, that it is the truth of God; and he applies it, and makes it the power of God unto salvation. He enables the hearers to mix such faith with it, that they receive and enjoy the happy fruits of Christ's victory. Once they were dead in trespasses and sins, but now Christ hath quickened them. They were guilty, and bound over to condemnation, but the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath freed them from the law of sin and of death. Once they walked after the course of this world, but now they walk with God. Their old enemies are still fighting against them, and watching for their destruction; but they are enabled to gain daily victory over them, over the world, the flesh, and the devil, through the strength of Jesus, and through the power of his might. Their wants are many, and they are daily made more sensible of them; but they have an abundant supply of every thing that pertains to life and godliness, out of the infinite fulness of God their Saviour.

Thus far the two Treatises went which were formerly published upon this subject, entitled, *The Life of Faith*, and *The Walk of Faith*. The present Treatise relates to the improvement of the former doctrines, considering the Scripture motives and en-

couragements for the believer's rejoicing always in the Lord, and triumphing in the God of his salvation. The ground of his triumph, is the work of Christ: his warrant to depend upon it, is the word of Christ: and his actual dependence, is the work of the Spirit of Christ. Building upon these principles, he is commanded to go on from faith to faith, still pressing forward, that he may see more clearly the glory of the person, and the glory of the work of Christ; what he is to trust to for his title to salvation, and for the things which accompany salvation; and may, by every day's experience, be growing into a more settled dependence upon the word of Christ, and upon his faithfulness to fulfil it; and thereby may be learning to expect constant supplies, and, according as his faith increases, receiving greater supplies of the power of the Spirit of Christ—that the God of hope may fill him with all joy and peace in believing, that he may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Ghost: and we have an encouraging example in the Thessalonians, who had great trials, and met them with great faith. The apostle commended it highly, but by practice it had so improved, that having occasion to mention it some time afterwards, he says—"We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly." We have the same promises, and the same helps, as they had—promises exceeding great and exceeding precious, containing a free grant in Christ of all spiritual blessings—a full warrant to make use of them for life and godliness, with commands and encouragements to trust and not be afraid of any enemies, or of any

dangers; because he is faithful who has promised to be with them—to guide them with his counsel—to keep them safe by his power—to bless them with his love—and never to leave them nor forsake them: so that, in all difficulties and troubles, they may go on their way rejoicing, until faith and patience have done their perfect work. To this purpose, a Divine, whose praise is in all the churches, has given his testimony:—"It is an everlasting spring of comfort and encouragement unto the people of God, both in prayer, and unto prayer: they pray to him who is mighty, mighty to do what they pray for. The Lord's promises are our richest inheritances, and that not only because he hath promised greater and better things than are in the compass of any man's power to make good, or in the compass of any man's understanding to comprehend; but because he will certainly be as good in performance, as he hath been in promise: for he is in one mind concerning all that he hath promised: he will be merciful as he hath promised, and pardon sin as he hath promised, and sanctify all our troubles as he hath promised: he will give us his Spirit as he hath promised, and save us eternally as he hath promised." A great layman thus confirms the same truth—"Were God but believed in what he says, all the temptations of Satan, and the doubtings of our unbelieving hearts, would be silenced and brought to nothing. What exceeding folly is it in our hearts, that God, who never deceived any that trusted in him, should be distrusted by any, and not believed by all! He is the God of truth: so is his word the word of truth. And not any soul, that ever tried God by trusting

him upon his word, but found him so. Oh, then, take God's word, and our hearts will be quiet. Though the heathen do rage, yet they imagine but a vain thing. In this glorious doctrine, free grace in God is the fountain, full satisfaction to divine justice the way, but perfect salvation and redemption to all his elect body in Christ the end. And truly when a soul can say, 'My Beloved is mine, and I am his,' he hath spoken all at once. I know no other light nor rule, but the word and Spirit, to make out any thing of God to any soul: the glory of the great day will be—God is mine, and I am his."

CHAPTER II.

Some Scripture Encouragements for the Triumph of Faith.

All the Old Testament words which we translate "triumph," signify *great joy*, felt in the heart, and expressed outwardly in word or deed; a jubilee of joy, even joy in the highest, as near as it can be to the joy of heaven. In the New Testament the word is used but twice. First, for what Christ engaged to do for us; and secondly, for what Christ engaged to do in us. For us he undertook to fight our battles against all our enemies—sin, the world, Satan, death, and hell: and the Captain of our salvation has gained a complete victory, and had a most glorious triumph over them in his own person, when he blotted out the hand-writing of ordinances that was

against us, which was contrary to us, and he took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in that same cross. And he still goes on conquering and to conquer. By the preaching of his cross and passion, his resurrection and ascension, he is to this very day exalting the honours of his victory and triumph in the hearts and lives of his redeemed, giving them such a share in his conquests, that they ought to be ever praising him with joyful lips—"Now thanks be unto God, who always causeth us to triumph in Christ." This was the apostle's happy experience. He found that the gospel, and his preaching of it, and the great success which attended it, were the fruits of Christ's presence with him, and blessing upon him: therefore to him he gave all the glory. So do we still. We see the triumphs of the cross spread far and wide, and we praise him for our day of gospel grace. The crucified Saviour in his majesty rides on prosperously in the chariots of salvation, and his enemies fall under him. In the day of his power, he makes them a willing people. They submit to his sceptre, and acknowledge him to be their Lord and their God. Under his banner they fight the good fight of faith, and they daily conquer, yea, they are more than conquerors through him who loveth them—crowned conquerors in glory everlasting. Thus it appears that the triumph of the Head includes the triumph of his members. The fountain from whence springs their present and their eternal joy, is God—God in Christ. They glory in the victories of the God-man, because of his commandment; because of his

free promise, which is a perfect warrant for the fullest confidence; and because of his goodness, truth, and power, which are bound to fulfil all his engagements. Looking to these infallible securities, the believer's heart is established, trusting in the Lord. Being of the true circumcision, he would put no confidence in the flesh, but would be daily crucifying it with its affections and lusts, and bringing all high thoughts of self to the obedience of Christ. If he has been long standing in the faith—an old Christian,—if he has received much consolation from his Lord, or has been very active and successful in his service, his trust is never in himself. The ground of his believing is always one and the same. He has no new doctrine to learn, no new warrant to encourage him to believe. The word of God, "Thus saith the Lord," is always sufficient; and ought to draw forth the fullest credit that can possibly be given to the testimony of the God of truth. What was advanced before in the *Life of Faith*, and in the *Walk of Faith*, is taken for granted in the present Treatise. Here is no new doctrine. Salvation is in Christ Jesus, and in no other: I am, says he, *the truth*, the one saving truth—like himself, the same yesterday, to day, and for ever. One Lord, one faith, one salvation. And whoever believes this aright is in a safe state, in which there is no change with respect to God; no variableness or shadow of turning. Whatever his own apprehensions may be, the word of the Lord endureth for ever. He may be tempted in a legal hour to cast away his confidence, but the counsel of the Lord shall stand. He may change; but I, saith God, change not. For the gracious

him through life, and may be found in him at the hour of death, and at the day of judgment—found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith! Blessed testimony for Jesus—encouraging example to place our whole trust and confidence in the Lord our righteousness, and our strength: for he is the same to us as he was to the apostle Paul, and we have as good reason to triumph as he had; because it is written, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God: for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and a bride adorneth herself with her jewels: for as the earth bringeth forth its bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations." This is the righteousness of faith, and these are the fruits of it, which abound to the glory of God, even peace with him, joy in him, a holy walk with him, and a victorious warfare by him. In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory. Herein to glory is the believer's bounden duty. He is called to it, as his gospel privilege, and according to his faith he does triumph in it, as his present happiness, and as a good ground for his hope of eternal joy. Wonderful blessings are promised to this faith and hope, and they are truly experienced at this day. Bless the Lord, O my soul, for his providing such a garment for *glory and beauty*. He has warranted thee to

put it on, and having through it free access into his presence, he has commanded thee to join that great multitude, whom no one can number, who are standing before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palms in their hands, and who cry with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation to our God, who sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever." Their robes are as white as the light, being washed clean in the blood of the Lamb; and through him they have conquered, as the palms in their hands denote; yea, are more than conquerors, having crowns of righteousness upon their heads, which can never fade away. For grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord. O what matter of triumph is here! a righteousness absolutely perfect and everlasting! This greatly enhances all our high joys in Christ, that there is full security for their continuance. It depends on the faithfulness of God to his word and promise, fixed in his eternal counsels, and established upon immutable things. "Their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord, and mine is an everlasting righteousness: lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner, but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished." The state of a believer is always one and the same on God's part. He may vary in his apprehensions of his state, but with God there is no variableness or shadow of turning. He may be a believer walking in darkness—tempted to doubt: he may pay too much attention to sense and feeling—

may get into a legal spirit—his evidences may be clouded—when outward things and providences seem to make against him, his faith may be sore tried, and he may stagger at the promises of God through some fit of unbelief—the man changeth, but God changeth not. His mercies are sure mercies. They cannot fail; for they spring from the ocean of grace, and are streams which no created power can cut off: but they shall infallibly return to it again, and shall bring with them all the happy objects of his love. The Father chose them, and gave them to his Son, who has all their names written in the Lamb's book of life: for them he lived and died; and when he presents them at the last day to the Father—"Behold I, and the children whom thou hast given me,"—not one of them shall be wanting; for the Holy Spirit is by his office the Lord and Giver of life to them, and in the day of his power he enables them to receive Jesus, and to live by faith upon him, as members united to, and in fellowship with, their glorified Head. This covenant of the blessed Trinity is unalterable, being ordered in all things and sure. All the subjects of its grace shall infallibly be saved, according to our Lord's promise, and according to our Lord's prayer; namely, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." Trusting to these immutable securities, the heirs of promise are commanded to draw strong consolation, even to rejoice in Jesus with a fulness of joy; in darkness as well as walking in light—in winter as well as in summer—in adversity as well as in prosperity—in

Christ. Amen." Fifth Sunday after Easter.—And again, the Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity: "O God, forasmuch as without thee we are not able to please thee; mercifully grant that thy Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

A great divine has thus expressed the same sentiments:—

"In those who are truly converted, all saving truths are transcribed out of the Scripture into their hearts. They are taught of God; so as they find all truths, both concerning the estate, and the gracious and happy estate of man, in themselves. They carry a body of divinity in them and about them; so as from a saving feeling they can speak of conversion, of grace, of the Spirit, &c. and from this acquaintance are ready to yield and give up themselves to truth revealed, and to God speaking by it. And thus a man may know his estate before God, by his relish for the word. There is a heavenly and divine relish in the word of God; as, for instance—Take the doctrine of his providence, that all things shall work together for the best to them that love God. What a sweet word is this! A whole kingdom is not worth this promise—That whatever befalls a Christian in this world, there is an overruling Providence to sway all to good, to help forward his eternal good—that Christ will be present with us in all conditions—that he will give us his Holy Spirit—that when we confess our sins, and lay them open, he is merciful to forgive them—that if our sins were red as scarlet, they shall be white as wool. What kind of incredible sweetness is in these to a heart that is

CHAPTER IV.

The Believer's Triumph in Jesus under a sense of the defilement of Sin.

It is in virtue of this fellowship with Jesus, that believers are freely forgiven all their iniquities. His atonement was the work of our great High Priest, who was made sin for us, although he knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. God is of purer eyes than to look upon the least iniquity; and there is a defilement in sin, which makes it exceedingly filthy and abominable in his sight. He showed his utter abhorrence of it, by establishing in the Old Testament such an abundance of legal pollutions, as might exhibit to sense the defiling nature of sin, and might keep it ever before their eyes, and fresh upon their minds. And by making it necessary that the worshippers should be purified from these pollutions, and by establishing the means of their purification, and by forbidding every other, he would lead them to exercise faith in the great Purifier, whose office it was to purge their consciences, before they could offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. And it was a fixed law, That if any one legally unclean neglected or refused the appointed means of being cleansed, he was to bear his iniquity: for an unpardoned sinner can have no communion with a most holy God.

Unto the pure, all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving, is nothing pure; but

So we read—"By faith in Christ, Enoch walked with God, and he had this testimony, that he pleased God; but without this faith it is impossible to please him:" therefore Enoch's state, and his walk, and his translation, were all by faith. Now we know, that the judgment of God is according to truth, and he has declared in the word of truth, that whatsoever is not of faith is sin. So that it is impossible it should please a most holy God; who has magnified his word above all his name, and who delights to see his people do the same—magnifying it, by giving it the fullest credit of their hearts, and the most perfect dependence of their lives.

He has also required this by his express command: This is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, who has said, "Ye believe in God, believe also in me," with the same faith, and with the same worship: and when the jailor inquired of Paul and Silas, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" they answered —"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." And this belief is commanded in very trying circumstances, when the outward supports of faith seem to fail, and the inward comforts are at a very low ebb: "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God,"—his God still. That relation is always the same; and so are the blessings which are included in it, and which he cannot fail to bestow upon them who honour his word in such trials of their faith, that against hope they believe in hope: for blessed are all *they* who put their trust in him.

For the farther confirmation of their faith, he has strengthened his commands with the most encouraging promises of grace to help in every time of need. Ask, and ye shall have; for he giveth to all askers liberally, and upbraideth not, come they ever so often, or ask ever so much: yea, our heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him; and his influence goes as far as any promise; for he is the mighty power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. Whatever is promised, he is almighty to fulfil. So we read when our Lord cursed the barren fig-tree, the apostles marvelled that it presently withered away. "Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, if ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig-tree, but also, if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done: and all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive:" for believing honours the truth of the Promiser, and asking in prayer for the fulfilling of it, engages and secures the promised grace. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much; so much, that the prayer of faith has opened and shut heaven. It has done wonders in removing mountains of difficulties, and conquering hosts of foes, which rendered it seemingly impossible that the word of God should be established. But faith gained the victory, and triumphed gloriously.

It has pleased God also to confirm all these arguments, by revealing the motive on which he made the promises. It was love. They are all free-grace promises. In his counsels, in the revealing them,

in the fulfilling them, love directs the whole. They are discoveries of what is in the Father's heart to his children, and are the means of conveying his fatherly blessings, especially such a persuasion of his love to them, as will work love to him; and they work by love. For we love him, because he first loved us: therefore he speaks to them comfortably, addressing himself to them in the tenderest compassion, and calling them by the dearest names,—his chosen—his beloved—his adopted—his children—his friends—heirs, heirs of God—joint-heirs with Christ, who is Lord of all—his peculiar treasure—his portion. These, and many other endearing names, are intended to convince them of his love, and to win and engage their hearts in love to him, that when it is given them to believe the truth of his promises, they might be certain of their fulfilment. God is love; he delighteth in his people. His heart is so set upon them, that, in his dealings with them, love has the appointing, the directing, and the blessing of all. His love to them had no beginning, and it will have no end. It bestows on the happy objects of it grace, and it secures to them glory. Love has crowned their Head; and love will crown all his members. For out of his fulness, they are most freely invited to come and take all spiritual blessings, as the earnest of eternal. Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon them! who can believe it, and not love him again?

It has pleased God also to give us some examples of his singular favour to them who acted strong faith, and to whom he therefore administered strong consolation. The apostle says, "That whatsoever

things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." And then he prays, "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Ghost." And when the Holy Ghost gives it this blessed effect, he always fills the heart with gratitude and thankfulness. Thus it operated in the day when the believer was enabled to say, "O Lord, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou hast comforted me. Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation. Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the fountain of salvation." O what reviving cordials did the father of the faithful draw out of it! who against hope believed in hope, that he should become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken—"So shall thy seed be: and being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body, now dead, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb: he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God:" and being fully persuaded, that what he had promised he was able also to perform. For this heroic faith he is celebrated in Scripture, and proposed to us for an example. One of his children was enabled to follow the close steps of his faith, through a life of continual and great sufferings, and to triumph in the prospect of a violent death: "I am now ready to be offered up, and the time of my departure is at hand: I have fought a

good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me in that day; and not to me only, but unto all them that love his appearing."

We have another example given us in the fifty-sixth Psalm. On whatever occasion the prophet indited it, the Spirit of prophecy teaches us to apply it to the Son of David, who is Christ the Lord. It describes his great trials, and continual persecutions, and his invincible faith, by which he was carried through them, when all the world was against him. The whole Psalm is a prayer made up of the most perfect trust and confidence in the faithfulness of God to his word, and he assures himself that heaven and earth shall pass away, before one jot or tittle of it could fail. He had enemies, many, mighty, cunning, cruel, united together to destroy him, Acts iv. 27. but his heart was established, trusting in the Lord. He read, he knew, he believed the promises made to him; and, without doubt or wavering, he waited for the fulfilling of them. Thus he viewed the Father's covenant engagements, who had declared—"Thus saith God the Lord, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein: I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and I will hold thy hand, I will keep thee, and I will give thee for a covenant of the people," &c. On this rock he built his faith, and could not be moved. "The Lord God," says he, "hath opened mine ear, and I was

not rebellious, neither turned away back: I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting; for the Lord God will help me, therefore shall I not be confounded; therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed. He is near that justifieth me, who will contend with me? Let us stand together. Who is mine adversary? Let him come near to me. Behold the Lord God will help me, who is he that shall condemn me? Lo, they all shall wax old as a garment, the moth shall eat them up." What an undaunted courage is here manifested! In this spirit of faith he prays—

Be gracious unto me, O God, because fallen man would devour me. All the day long he is fighting against me, and oppressing me: all the day long mine enemies would devour me; for they are many who fight against me, O thou Most High. In the day when I might have reason to fear, I will put my trust in thee: I shall praise God because of his word: in God I have put my trust, I will not fear what flesh can do unto me: all the day long they torture my words: all their devices are against me for evil: they assemble together: they hide themselves; they watch my steps, as if they were waiting for my life. Shall they escape for their wickedness? In thine anger, O God, thou wilt bring these people under: thou numberest my wanderings: thou hast put my tears into thy bottle: are they not recorded in thy register? In the day when I shall pray unto thee, then shall mine enemies be driven back: this I have known for certain, because God is on my side:

I will praise God, because of his word: I will praise Jehovah, because of his word. In God have I trusted, I will not fear what man can do unto me. Thy vows are upon me, O God. I will pay my thanksgivings unto thee; for thou hast delivered my life from death. Wilt thou not also keep my feet from falling, that I may be able to walk in the presence of God, in the light of life everlasting?

O what a perfect trust and confidence is this! and how loudly does it call upon us to look to his example, that God would give us grace to follow the steps of his faith! Observe, O my soul, and consider the pattern set before thee. He had God on his side—the promises, the power, the providences of the Almighty. He knew that every step was marked, every tear noticed, and that God had them in the book of his remembrance. In this faith he met his trials, and came off triumphant. Notwithstanding his many weary steps, and his strong crying and tears under that sorrow, which never had its like, yet he knew that he should be heard—and he was heard: his enemies fell before him; but they rose, and returned to the combat. Upon the word he casts his anchor again. He trusts to it; and he finds it firm and sure still. The storm is great; it continues—it increases. All thy waves and storms, says he to his God, are gone over me. But, my soul, trust thou still in the Lord; for my hope is in him. His word is my stay: it cannot be broken. I praise him for it: again I praise him for it. Trusting in it, now my fears are gone. God is my helper, and I will not fear what man can do unto me. O what a pattern is here set for us! May the medi-

tation upon it be useful. May the gracious Lord, who is the Author and the Finisher of the faith, bless the means of his own appointing, for the strengthening of it. And in the use of them, looking up for the constant supplies of his Spirit, may he enable us to go on from strength to strength, keeping this example always in view, until he bring us in peace unto the end of our faith.

These are some of the Scripture grounds upon which the triumph of faith is built. It stands upon the almighty power of God, as engaged to fulfil his word: for his word is his deed. To take him at his word is the proper exercise of faith. He hath promised, and it is done. To rest thus upon it, as what cannot possibly fail, is the foundation of Christian worship: and when it is established in the heart, in the love of the truth, it constitutes the chief of that service, which is perfect freedom: for God has declared himself well pleased with our trusting to his truth and faithfulness. He has commanded us to do it without doubt or wavering. He has promised grace sufficient to enable us thus to believe, and we cannot put too much trust and confidence in his arm and power. And he has also given us examples of those who honoured him with the fullest reliance of their hearts, and had reason to rejoice in the Lord, who keepeth promise for ever. Glory be to him for such encouragements of our faith. O that they may have their proper effect! May the Holy Ghost apply them by his grace, and give us such a faith as may be well pleasing unto God: such a faith as he has commanded, and for the full exercise of which he has made exceeding great promises. Help us,

O God of all grace, to trust and not be afraid; for thou art faithful: thy word and thy promises give us full security to trust in the Lord at all times; because in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength; and blessed are all they who put their trust in him.

But by what ways and means shall these arguments and encouragements have their full effect? This is the main point, and it is settled beyond dispute upon Scripture authority. The same Spirit who revealed the promises, is also the fulfiller of them: and he is almighty. The blessing on the use of the means is entirely from him: it is he who teacheth man knowledge; and from him we are to seek it in prayer. With all our reading, hearing, studying, meditating upon the Scriptures, we must look up to him for his divine teaching. If any of you, believers, lack wisdom, let him ask it of God, who giveth to all askers liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him; but let him ask in faith. Here is a command and a promise. When we lack wisdom, which we always do, as much as we want breath, we are to ask it of the Spirit of wisdom, and it shall be given us. He will make us wise unto salvation. He will keep us in the use of means, dependent on his leading us into all useful truth, and of his revealing to us the things which are freely given to us of God, to show them to us as realities, and to put us into the enjoyment of them as blessings. In this dependence on him, we live, and move, and have our being. Our spiritual life and faculties, and the exercise of them, and the improvement of them, are entirely from his influence. For the apostle, mentioning the several

gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, says, "All these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man his own gifts, according to his own will." To him then we are to look up for every good gift, and every perfect gift. Whenever we open the Bible, we should ask his light and his teaching. He is the chief commentator. He only can put the Scriptures into our inward parts, and write them upon our hearts, so that we may experience them to be the power of God unto our own salvation. Our first reformers were of this sentiment, exhorting us to pray, that "by the holy inspiration of God's Spirit, we may think those things that be good, and by his merciful guiding may perform the same." "Grant to us, Lord, we beseech thee, the Spirit, to think and do always such things as be rightful; that we who cannot do any thing that is good without thee, may by thee be enabled to live according to thy will, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen." Ninth Sunday after Trinity.

As they prayed, so they sang: for we meet with two hymns, inserted by the reformers in the Common Prayer Book, appointed to be sung at the ordaining of priests, and at the consecration of bishops. The first begins with these words—

> Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire,
> And lighten with celestial fire, &c.

Out of the second I quote some verses, not for any excellency of the poetry, but for the soundness of the divinity expressed in these lines—

Come, Holy Ghost, eternal God,
  Proceeding from above,
Both from the Father and the Son,
  The God of peace and love:

Visit our minds, and into us
  Thy heavenly grace inspire,
That in all truth and godliness
  We may have true desire.

Thou in thy gifts art manifold,
  Whereby Christ's church doth stand,
In faithful hearts writing thy law,
  The finger of God's hand.

According to thy promise made,
  Thou givest speech of grace,
That through thy help, the praise of God
  May stand in every place.

O Holy Ghost, into our souls
  Send down thy heavenly light,
Kindle our heart with fervent love,
  To serve God day and night.

Strengthen and stablish our weakness,
  So feeble and so frail,
That neither devil, world, nor flesh,
  Against us may prevail.

Grant us, O Lord, through thee to know
  The Father most of might,
That of his dear beloved Son,
  We may attain the sight.

And that with perfect faith also,
  We may acknowledge thee,
The Spirit of them both always,
  One God in persons three.

From these authorities, it appears to be the doctrine of the Scriptures, and of our reformers in har-

mony with them, That spiritual life, and knowledge, and faith in Christ, and hope in him that maketh not ashamed, and holy love, with every godly motion of the heart, come from the holy inspiration of God the Spirit. It is from him that we understand the Scriptures, in the mind of the Spirit: it is from his grace that we grow in Scripture knowledge, and persevere in the use of means, and, at the same time, in a constant dependence on his presence in them, for the furtherance and joy of our faith. He begins, he carries on, and he perfects, our learning in his revealed word and will. O that he may make us and keep us good scholars, in an abiding sense of the necessity of his divine teaching; that the Spirit and the word may go together in our Bible studies, and Bible experience; so that this may be the daily prayer of our faith:—

O thou Spirit of wisdom and revelation, who hast taught us that secret things belong to the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children for ever; open the eyes of our understanding to understand what is revealed in the Scriptures for our use. Dispose us to hear them, read them, and meditate on them with profit. And help us to mix more faith with them, that they may become more precious. In every day's reading, grant that we may find them to be the ingrafted word, and that we are really branches grafted into the tree of life, and, by the rain and shining of heaven, enabled to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit abundantly. For all these blessings keep us ever dependent on thy divine teaching, that our fruits may grow richer and riper—we may be more humble in our hearts, and

more thankful in our lives; and so we, who can learn nothing as we ought without thee, may, by thy grace, be made wise unto eternal salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus—To whom, with Thee, O Father, and Thee, O Holy Spirit, be equal honour and glory, now and for ever. Amen.

CHAPTER III.

The Believer's Triumph in the Lord his Righteousness.

THE object of his rejoicing is always one and the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever, without any variableness, or shadow of turning. It is Christ, God in Christ, concerning whom the commandment runs—Rejoice in the Lord Jesus always, and again, I say, rejoice; there being in him a fountain of joy, springing up into everlasting life. What he is in his own wonderful person—what is revealed of his gracious works and ways, in his dealings with the sinners of mankind—what he did for them in the days of his flesh—what he does in them by his Spirit in time—what he has promised to give them in eternity: in every possible view that can be taken of him, a believer may and ought to rejoice always, and that with a fulness of joy: for thus the apostle offers up his praise—"Now thanks be to God, who always causeth us to triumph in Christ." For he has in his person every possible subject of triumphant joy. He is true and very God; and he is true and very man—God and man in one Christ. The prophet

Isaiah foretold this marvellous union, and gloried in the prospect: For us men, and for our salvation, a child is born, and a Son is given; and his name shall be called Wonderful, because the child is the mighty God, and the Son is the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. This is the great mystery of godliness, of which the saints in the Old Testament sang with the sweetest melody in their hearts unto the Lord: as the prophet does in the 148th Psalm, calling upon all in heaven and earth, with all their inhabitants, to join him in the praises of Emmanuel; because his name alone is excellent, and his praise above heaven and earth. So that New Testament saint felt it, who declared, that he "accounted all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and I do account them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him,"—found so united to him as to be one with him; for he was united to our nature, in order to bring about another most blessed union,—he taking our nature, that we might take his—he made the son of man, that we might be made the sons of God—he having the power of an endless life, that he might give spiritual and eternal life to all believers: for they in the day of his power are joined to the Lord by one Spirit—the same Spirit in the members as in the Head—that through him their Head, they might be able to say, "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, by the bond of his Spirit." It is not possible for man to conceive higher things than our Lord has prayed for in these words—"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also

rant, who rules his slaves with the most cruel rigour, keeping them captive to his will, although nothing but destruction and misery be in their ways.

Thus original sin is described in the ninth Article of our church—It is the fault and corruption of every man born of Adam; and, notwithstanding it still remaineth in the regenerate, yet there is a promise of daily and of complete victory over the tyrant. Thus it is written: "Sin shall not have dominion over you; because ye are not under the law, but under grace." Once sin had full dominion, but it is taken away by the Spirit of Christ; not entirely destroyed as to its being, but as to its ruling power—Dethroned in the judgment: there seen as it is, exceedingly sinful, exceeding dangerous—Dethroned in the conscience: the believer no longer under the law, but under grace, is freed from condemnation—Dethroned in the will: "Not my will, Lord, but thine be done"—Dethroned in the heart: "I hate all evil thoughts, but thy law do I love: O what love have I unto thy law!"—Dethroned in the life: crucified with its affections and lusts, by the power of the cross of Jesus. It is not quite dead, but it is put to a lingering death, kept upon the cross, dying daily. And thus the sin, which is pardoned through the blood of Christ, is conquered by the arm of Christ; as it is written, "He will subdue our iniquities:" and faith in his promised help keeps them under, subdues them effectually, so that they do not reign in the mortal body to obey them in the lusts thereof. Take an instance of this triumphant faith. Whatever the natural man can set his heart upon, or seek his happiness in—the lust of the eyes, or the pride

and I will praise thee more and more: my mouth shall show forth thy righteousness, and thy salvation all the day; for I know not the numbers thereof: I will go in the strength of the Lord God, I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only." He found the blessings flowing from it numberless and endless: so that it was all he wanted for his justification to life, and for his title to glory—it only. In the same Psalm, admiring and adoring the wonders of the gift of grace, he breaks out: "Thy righteousness, O God, is very high, who hast done great things: O God, who is like unto thee?" He was so complete in this righteousness of Christ, that he would mix nothing with it for his free access to God, or for his full acceptance before God. He knew that this righteousness of faith was appointed of God, was the gift of his grace, and was all-sufficient, being an everlasting righteousness; and therefore it effectually removed the consciousness of sin from his heart, and enabled him to come boldly to the throne of grace, where he stood perfectly justified in Jesus. And in the same spirit we hear a New Testament saint resolving to exclude all glorying, except in Christ and in his righteousness—"in whom God can be just, and yet the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? By the law of works? Nay, but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude, that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law; and that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." This was the apostle's highest ambition, to be found in his precious Saviour. O that I may rejoice in

him through life, and may be found in him at the hour of death, and at the day of judgment—found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith! Blessed testimony for Jesus—encouraging example to place our whole trust and confidence in the Lord our righteousness, and our strength: for he is the same to us as he was to the apostle Paul, and we have as good reason to triumph as he had; because it is written, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God: for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and a bride adorneth herself with her jewels: for as the earth bringeth forth its bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations." This is the righteousness of faith, and these are the fruits of it, which abound to the glory of God, even peace with him, joy in him, a holy walk with him, and a victorious warfare by him. In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory. Herein to glory is the believer's bounden duty. He is called to it, as his gospel privilege, and according to his faith he does triumph in it, as his present happiness, and as a good ground for his hope of eternal joy. Wonderful blessings are promised to this faith and hope, and they are truly experienced at this day. Bless the Lord, O my soul, for his providing such a garment for glory and beauty. He has warranted thee to

put it on, and having through it free access into his presence, he has commanded thee to join that great multitude, whom no one can number, who are standing before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palms in their hands, and who cry with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation to our God, who sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever." Their robes are as white as the light, being washed clean in the blood of the Lamb; and through him they have conquered, as the palms in their hands denote; yea, are more than conquerors, having crowns of righteousness upon their heads, which can never fade away. For grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord. O what matter of triumph is here! a righteousness absolutely perfect and everlasting! This greatly enhances all our high joys in Christ, that there is full security for their continuance. It depends on the faithfulness of God to his word and promise, fixed in his eternal counsels, and established upon immutable things. "Their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord, and mine is an everlasting righteousness: lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner, but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished." The state of a believer is always one and the same on God's part. He may vary in his apprehensions of his state, but with God there is no variableness or shadow of turning. He may be a believer walking in darkness—tempted to doubt: he may pay too much attention to sense and feeling—

may get into a legal spirit—his evidences may be clouded—when outward things and providences seem to make against him, his faith may be sore tried, and he may stagger at the promises of God through some fit of unbelief—the man changeth, but God changeth not. His mercies are sure mercies. They cannot fail; for they spring from the ocean of grace, and are streams which no created power can cut off: but they shall infallibly return to it again, and shall bring with them all the happy objects of his love. The Father chose them, and gave them to his Son, who has all their names written in the Lamb's book of life: for them he lived and died; and when he presents them at the last day to the Father—"Behold I, and the children whom thou hast given me,"—not one of them shall be wanting; for the Holy Spirit is by his office the Lord and Giver of life to them, and in the day of his power he enables them to receive Jesus, and to live by faith upon him, as members united to, and in fellowship with, their glorified Head. This covenant of the blessed Trinity is unalterable, being ordered in all things and sure. All the subjects of its grace shall infallibly be saved, according to our Lord's promise, and according to our Lord's prayer; namely, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." Trusting to these immutable securities, the heirs of promise are commanded to draw strong consolation, even to rejoice in Jesus with a fulness of joy; in darkness as well as walking in light—in winter as well as in summer—in adversity as well as in prosperity—in

death as well as in life; because he has all power in heaven and earth to make good to them every covenant engagement. And he will do it: for the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and shall come to Sion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away for ever.

O thou most blessed God and Saviour! thou art the Lord our righteousness and our strength. I believe that the whole Israel of God shall be justified only by thee, and in thee only shall they glory. O let thy Spirit abide with me, to increase in me this faith, that, by fresh supplies of his grace, I may be kept from going about to establish my own righteousness, and may constantly submit myself to the righteousness of God. And, by the same grace, help me to bring forth the fruits of righteousness abundantly unto the glory and praise of God, magnifying thine atonement in the peace of my conscience, exalting thy righteousness in the love of my heart, and in my walk and warfare glorifying thy fulness; so that out of it I may be receiving a sufficiency of grace, by which I am now enabled to bless thee for the hope of glory. To thee, almighty Jesus, for the work of righteousness, which is peace, and for the effect of righteousness, which is quietness and assurance for ever—to thee be everlasting praise. Amen, and amen.

CHAPTER IV.

The Believer's Triumph in Jesus under a sense of the defilement of Sin.

It is in virtue of this fellowship with Jesus, that believers are freely forgiven all their iniquities. His atonement was the work of our great High Priest, who was made sin for us, although he knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. God is of purer eyes than to look upon the least iniquity; and there is a defilement in sin, which makes it exceedingly filthy and abominable in his sight. He showed his utter abhorrence of it, by establishing in the Old Testament such an abundance of legal pollutions, as might exhibit to sense the defiling nature of sin, and might keep it ever before their eyes, and fresh upon their minds. And by making it necessary that the worshippers should be purified from these pollutions, and by establishing the means of their purification, and by forbidding every other, he would lead them to exercise faith in the great Purifier, whose office it was to purge their consciences, before they could offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. And it was a fixed law, That if any one legally unclean neglected or refused the appointed means of being cleansed, he was to bear his iniquity: for an unpardoned sinner can have no communion with a most holy God.

Unto the pure, all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving, is nothing pure; but

even their mind and conscience is defiled. The mind is the fountain from whence all the streams flow. Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, &c.—these are the things which defile the man. An enlightened conscience is made sensible of this, and feels the necessity of being purified from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, in order to approach God, and to have boldness and access with confidence to the throne of grace. His meditations at such times are like these:—

The more I know of myself, the more am I led to loathe myself, and to repent in dust and ashes: for I am a sinner, filthy and abominable altogether. By nature as vile as sin can render a fallen creature, and daily polluting myself in heart and life with fresh impurities. I have no means of cleansing myself; no hope, that any thing in the creation can do it for me. Deep in my very constitution the stain remains. And I am forced to be crying out—Unclean, unclean! My case would be quite desperate, if God himself had not provided a remedy, the report of which has come to mine ears in the gospel. O it is blessed news! I welcome it to mine heart, that God has opened a fountain which cleanseth from all sin. He has recommended it to me, as having infinite virtue and everlasting efficacy to cleanse. And I have a command from heaven, vile and filthy as I am, to make use of it: for thus it is written—"In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness." When the Holy Spirit enables the sinner to believe the report, and to mix faith with it, then he has a war-

all evil, and to give them all possible good. "I the Lord," says he, "do keep thee—I will water thee with the dew of heaven every moment—lest any hurt thee, I will keep thee night and day." Having such great and exceeding precious promises, with what holy courage should the believer look up to a faithful God, and what strong consolation should they afford him, when he is to go through the fire, or through the water! He may sing with Jonah, "I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving—salvation is of the Lord." Or with the triumphant faith of the three children who were not afraid to go into the furnace, heated seven times hotter than usual, fully persuaded, that, whether they lived or died, Jesus would be with them. Threatened with the burning fiery furnace, if they refused to worship Nebuchadnezzar's image, "They said, O king, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter: if it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thy hand, O king." And he did; he went with them into the fire, and they walked in the midst of the flames unhurt. The same Jesus is daily repeating the same miracle. He has approved himself in all ages to be the friend of his afflicted people: whatever he sends to them, he sends it with his blessing. So they testify: "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God." They knew it by his promise, and they felt it by experience: It is good for us that we have been in trouble: we have gone through many seas and storms of affliction, and through the raging fire of persecution, not only unhurt, but benefited; for Christ was with

us. As the suffering of Christ abounded, so our consolation abounded by Christ: he feels for them, as his members, and has bowels of the tenderest compassion. In all their affliction he is afflicted. He brings in his supports, and comes with his deliverance, in the best time. He leaves no accusation of sin in the conscience, but gives and maintains a sweet peace with God. O what matter of triumph is it, when this peace rules in the heart, always and by all means testifying—" Since God is for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." Thanks without ceasing be to Jesus, the Lamb that was slain, for this complete and eternal victory over sin. The apostle carries on his praises, Romans viii. that through Jesus all outward opposition shall fall before us: " Who shall separate us from Christ's love to us: shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter: nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that hath loved us." His love is in them all—appoints them, sends them, proportions them, and they conquer them all in his strength. Not only conquer, but are more than conquerors,—they are great gainers: they gain what is better than all the world, fresh proofs of his love:

more accepted before God, than he does who is washed in the blood of the Lamb. O blessed man who has obtained redemption by it! thou art commanded to enter with boldness into the holiest by the blood of Jesus—the way is open: thou art called to draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having thy heart sprinkled from an evil conscience, and thy body washed with pure water, that thou mayest hold thy profession of faith without wavering, as that great multitude did, who washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb: they are now crying with a loud voice, "Salvation to our God who sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever!" They triumph indeed; and so mayest thou. Thou hast the same reason as they have. The same fountain, which washed their robes, cleanses thine. The same promises that it will; and thou shalt stand before God without spot of sin unto eternal salvation, as perfect as they. Jesus is thy Saviour, as truly as he is theirs: even to-day, thy conscience purged from guilt, and thy heart purified by faith, thou mayest enter within the vail, and make sweet melody in thy heart unto the Lord thy God. Our elder brethren round his throne, are employed in the same delightful work: we do it here as well as we can: they in heaven, and we on earth. The same subject in the church below, as well as above, and the same employment. We try to sing the praises of the worthy slaughtered Lamb in as high a note as they do. And when we fail, we try again, praying the Holy Spirit to enable us to keep in tune with them, that our songs may daily be more spiritual and heavenly.

A poet of our own, feeling something of this harmony, would have us to celebrate the triumphs of the Lamb of God in these words:—

There is a fountain filled with blood,
  Drawn from Emmanuel's veins,
And sinners plunged beneath that flood,
  Lose all their guilty stains.

The dying thief rejoiced to see
  That fountain in his day;
And there have I, as vile as he,
  Washed all my sins away.

Dear dying Lamb, thy precious blood
  Shall never lose its power,
Till all the ransomed church of God
  Be saved to sin no more.

E'er since by faith I saw the stream
  Thy flowing wounds supply,
Redeeming love has been my theme,
  And shall be till I die.

Then in a nobler sweeter song
  I'll sing thy power to save,
When this poor lisping, stamm'ring tongue
  Lies silent in the grave.

The song of heaven is upon this same subject. The Holy Ghost has taught us the very words of their divine hymn, and what is the harmony of all the redeemed round the throne, with one heart and one voice, blessing God and the Lamb: O that he may tune our hearts to join the chorus, and fit us now to sing in as high a strain as we can, and every day to aim higher, till we come to the completion of the heavenly vision thus described by the apostle!—

"After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, whom no one could number, of all nations, and kin-

dreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands. These are they who came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb: therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth upon the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat: for the Lamb, who is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." "And they sung with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God who sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever"—"Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

CHAPTER V.

The Believer's Triumph over Sin in its guilt.

THE forgiveness of sins is the grand doctrine of salvation, on which peace with God is built. Sin is present with the believer, but pardoned. Sin is felt, but ceases to condemn. This is the chief difficulty in experience, How the truth of God, and his holiness, and his threatenings, and the honour of

his law, can be maintained, and yet he can be faithful and just to forgive us our sins. The believer may be often shaken in his mind, and troubled with legal fears and workings, if he be not so well established by the Spirit and word of God, as to submit in his conscience to God's way of pardoning sin: it was always one and the same, contrived and appointed in the everlasting counsels of the blessed Trinity, and revealed upon the entrance of sin, namely, that a person in Jehovah would become incarnate, and take away sin by the sacrifice of himself. To him Moses and all the prophets gave witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins. The proclamation of grace holds it out most clearly. When Moses was permitted to see his glory, the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth: keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin." Every sacrifice preached this same truth visibly, showing the death which the sinner deserved, and the divine method of pardoning it, through faith in the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world; for Jesus is the very paschal Lamb who was sacrificed for us: and the deliverance which they experienced in Egypt, through the sprinkling of his blood, we feel the same in our hearts unto this day. Through faith they kept the passover and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the first-born should touch them: through the same faith we keep the same feast, and having found redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins, we live safe out of the reach of

the destroyer. We know our danger as they did, and we look to the Lamb of God for safety. It is the Holy Spirit who convinces both of sin and of pardon. His conviction of sin makes an impression upon the conscience of its infinite evil. He stops the sinner's mouth, and makes him subscribe to all that is said in Scripture of his guilt and of his danger. Looking at himself under the law, and under sin, which is the transgression of the law, he is made to submit to the sentence of condemnation, and has nothing of his own to plead in arrest of judgment. Thus he is taught to think of the law as God does, both of its precepts and penalties. He sees infinite justice, and holiness, and truth, armed against him, and the desert of his sins to be everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, which he has no power to resist, and no means to escape. When the Holy Spirit convinces him of righteousness, and manifests the grace of God in the free forgiveness of his sins, yet still he feels the exceeding wickedness of them. He loathes and abhors himself as the subject of them, and groans, being burdened with the abiding sense of his corruptions. At his very best it is—" O wretched man, who shall deliver me?" &c. but at the same time he can rejoice in God his Saviour—" I thank God through Jesus Christ" —He is the propitiation for my sins, and I have found peace with God through faith in his blood. Thus the Holy Spirit glorifies Jesus. He gives a steadfast faith in the atonement of Jesus, and settles such a peace in the conscience, as answers all charges from sin and from unbelief. And hereby he fulfils the proclamation of grace in the New Testament,

it is entirely of thy special favour that I have any good hope to come to their glory. For this, and for all thy mercies, to Thee, with the Father, and the eternal Spirit, the Three in one Jehovah, I give honour, and glory, and thanks, to-day, and I hope to do it without ceasing, for ever and ever. Amen and amen.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Believer's Triumph over the Infirmities of Old Age.

It is appointed unto all men once to die. The time is fixed by an immutable decree. "The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we flee away." If some be permitted to live longer, yet the infirmities of old age must arrive, bringing with them labour and sorrow, the forerunners of death. Circulation will become languid. The senses of the body will grow dull and heavy. The faculties of the mind will be impaired, and will discover it by not remembering proper names. In this decline of life, believers are subject to the same infirmities with other men. They have no exemption from pain, or sickness, or death; but they have that which keeps up their spirits, and makes them patient and joyful. The consolations of God are then most needed; and he has promised them, and he is faithful: he never failed them who trusted in him. He

Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith that is in me." When this commission is opened to a sinner in his name, and credited by the power of his Spirit, then the conscience is purged from guilt, by that one offering which perfecteth for ever. The believer in it has a clean heart given him. It is sanctified, and made a temple for the worship of the true God. To this the word witnesses—and the Holy Ghost is also a witness to him, that he may now enter with boldness into the holiest of all by the blood of Jesus—every possible hinderance being removed, he may have access with confidence to the throne of grace—to a Father of mercies, loving him, and blessing him with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus. When he lives up to these privileges, then he feels as he ought to do. His faith relying steadfastly upon the divine promises, and giving full credit to a faithful God, he has a good conscience purged from dead works to serve the living God; and his heart consecrated for this service, he may sing of pardon and peace in as high a note of praise, and with as much spiritual joy, as ever any believer experienced. They had much in the Old Testament, when they sung the triumphs of the Lamb of God in the twentieth Psalm. The argument of which is thus given us in Bishop Horne's Comment: " 1—4. The church prayeth for the prosperity of King Messiah going forth to the battle, as her champion and deliverer: for his acceptance by the Father, and for the accomplishment of his will. 5—7. She declareth her full assurance of faith, and her resolution to trust in him alone,

and not in the arm of flesh. 8. She foreseeth the fall of her enemies, and her own exaltation: and, 9. concludeth with a prayer to the God of her strength." As long as the temple stood, and the service of God was regularly carried on in it, the true worshippers had every day a solemn commemoration of that sacrifice which was to put away their sins. They were taught to look to that precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, whom God had set forth in every sacrifice to be the great propitiation and atonement; through which alone they were to expect pardon and peace. While the lamb was burning on the altar, every morning and evening, they celebrated his praises with the choicest instruments of music, and with the sweetest voices, making also melody in their hearts at the same time unto the Lord. Among other hymns given by inspiration of God for this joyful occasion, they used to sing the twentieth Psalm, in which they triumphed in the God of their salvation, and declared their faith and hope in him, in full concert, after this manner—

"Jehovah will hear thee in the day of trouble, the name of the God of Jacob will defend thee: he will send thee help from his sanctuary, and he will strengthen thee out of Sion: he will grant thee according to thy heart, and he will fulfil all thy purposes: then we shall shout for joy in thy salvation, and in the name of our God we shall set up our banners, when Jehovah shall fulfil all thy requests. Now I have known that Jehovah will help the Messiah, his Christ, and will answer him from his sanc-

tuary with the mighty power of the right hand of Jesus. Some put their trust in chariots, and others in horses, but we will cause the name of Jehovah, our Alehim, (the Trinity in covenant,) to be remembered: they are brought down and fallen, but we are risen, and made still to stand safe: for the King (Jesus) will put forth his power to save us; he will answer us in the day when we pray unto him."

These are the words of the hymn: in which they express their faith in the future triumphs of the Lamb of God, and their hope in that one offering of his, which was to perfect them for ever. The divine appointment, the divine acceptance, the divine application of his sacrifice, is the most noble subject that could be sung upon earth: indeed it is the subject of heaven, and will be the harmony and concert of eternity. May the Holy Ghost put our hearts in tune to join in it, and to adore and to bless the Lamb that was slain, setting up our banners as they did, Romans viii. 31—34. conquerors over sin and Satan, and all their enemies. We have the same Jesus to rejoice in, and as good reason as ever believers had, to rejoice in him with a fulness of joy. When the heart feels as happy as it can be here in God the Saviour, these are some of the delightful exercises of faith in his blood—

Oh, what am I, that such a sinner as I am should be thus highly favoured! A child of wrath by nature, even as others, and by practice—having sinned long with greediness—against light and conviction—sinning and sorrowing—sorrowing and sinning, from year to year—a slave to the lust of the flesh, to the lust of the eyes, and to the pride of life, every

heir of the same promise with his father, that he died, in the same faith, an old man. He was tried with many infirmities, but we read of no complaints, though he was a hundred and eighty years of age. He expired in praise and thankfulness; satisfied with life, and happy in the prospect beyond death. And his son Jacob, a hundred and forty-seven years old, when he was dying, declared that he had waited for the salvation of God—waiting faith is strong faith—and after he had blessed his children, and had given commandment concerning his bones, he quietly, as if he had been going to sleep, gathered up his feet into the bed, and died in peace, an old man and satisfied. All these lived in the world, strangers and pilgrims, looking for a city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God: and they were not disappointed of their hope; they all died in faith—in an act of faith, and were gathered to their people, to the general assembly and church of the first-born. When they came to the end of their faith, they came to heaven. The moment they expired, they entered the city which God had prepared for them: and their bodies, sleeping in the dust, are in the covenant of life, and shall be raised and glorified in the morning of the resurrection. For our Lord proves that the dead shall rise from this very circumstance: he says to the Jews—"Have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob: he is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living." In this faith the patriarchs died: being children of the resurrection, they left their bodies in the hand and care of

CHAPTER VI.

The Believer's Victory over the dominion of Sin.

We have heard from Scripture some of the victories of faith over sin in its pollution and in its guilt; but there is still a hard warfare to be maintained against its dominion; for it reigneth absolutely in the children of disobedience, and it never ceaseth to strive for mastery in the children of God; who have an evil nature still—an old man, who is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts, and who is to be put off every day—denied in his desires, mortified in his affections, and crucified in his appetites. Thus the commandment runs—"Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth." And the new man, who is called to this warfare, is ordered to make use of Christ's fulness for promised courage, and strength, and victory: for without Christ he can do nothing. Sin is himself—he is a body of sin; and he has not only to fight against himself, but also against principalities and powers, hosts of foes, united under the banner of the god of this world, trying all their cunning, and all their force, to bring the believer back into the bondage of corruption: and what he has of his own is on their side. His worst foe is his indwelling sin, which has a complete body, with all its members and lusts, always enticing to something unlawful, and tempting to the commission of it. Every faculty is ready to become an instrument of unrighteousness unto sin. It is an absolute ty-

rant, who rules his slaves with the most cruel rigour, keeping them captive to his will, although nothing but destruction and misery be in their ways.

Thus original sin is described in the ninth Article of our church—It is the fault and corruption of every man born of Adam; and, notwithstanding it still remaineth in the regenerate, yet there is a promise of daily and of complete victory over the tyrant. Thus it is written: "Sin shall not have dominion over you; because ye are not under the law, but under grace." Once sin had full dominion, but it is taken away by the Spirit of Christ; not entirely destroyed as to its being, but as to its ruling power—Dethroned in the judgment: there seen as it is, exceedingly sinful, exceeding dangerous—Dethroned in the conscience: the believer no longer under the law, but under grace, is freed from condemnation—Dethroned in the will: "Not my will, Lord, but thine be done"—Dethroned in the heart: "I hate all evil thoughts, but thy law do I love: O what love have I unto thy law!"—Dethroned in the life: crucified with its affections and lusts, by the power of the cross of Jesus. It is not quite dead, but it is put to a lingering death, kept upon the cross, dying daily. And thus the sin, which is pardoned through the blood of Christ, is conquered by the arm of Christ; as it is written, "He will subdue our iniquities:" and faith in his promised help keeps them under, subdues them effectually, so that they do not reign in the mortal body to obey them in the lusts thereof. Take an instance of this triumphant faith. Whatever the natural man can set his heart upon, or seek his happiness in—the lust of the eyes, or the pride

of life—Moses was enabled by the Spirit of Christ to overcome: "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward." What but almighty grace could have given him such a complete victory? He gained entire dominion over sin, even when it came to tempt him with all the pleasures, and riches, and honours of the world. He was made strong in faith; Christ ruling in his heart brought every high thought into subjection to himself: so that Moses not only resigned all his temporal advantages for Christ's sake, but, what natural men account a great paradox, he chose reproach, poverty, misery, rather than give up his interest in Christ. This is the victory which still overcometh the world, even our faith: for the New Testament furnishes us with such another instance of Christian heroism in the apostle of the Gentiles. He is giving an account of his own experience, and by what means he was now no longer under the law, but under grace—a sinner saved from the sentence of the broken law, and from all hope of being made righteous by his own personal keeping of it—"I through the law," says he, "am dead to the law, that I might live unto God," &c. Once he was alive without the law, when he thought proudly of his own good life, that concerning the law he was blameless; but when the commandment came in the power of the Spirit, then it slew him, and killed all his former legal hopes.

What he had trusted in before for life, he now found to be unto death. And Christ, faith in Christ, was the only means by which he saw he could live unto God, by his grace and to his glory. By this faith he then experienced the power of the crucified and risen Jesus: I am in Christ, says he, crucified with him, truly and spiritually dead to sin, to self, to the world, by the virtue of his cross. Nevertheless, by the same faith in the same Jesus, I live: the Spirit of life in him has quickened my spirit: he has given me a new birth into the spiritual world, and has brought me to live upon the fulness of Jesus, as really now by faith, as I hope to live upon him by sense in heaven: "Yet not I;" I neither had it of myself, nor do I continue it by any act of my own, "but Christ liveth in me;" and although I seem to live outwardly like other men, yet "the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God," depending upon him every moment for fresh supplies of his Spirit, to keep me in union and communion with the Father and the Son; and thereby he gives me to feel in my heart some of the blessings of that love of God in Christ, which surpasseth knowledge. It is this that purifies my soul, and sanctifies my life; blessed, for ever blessed be his name, who thus loved me, and gave himself for me.

Such were the heroes of Christianity. They fought the Lord's battles, and in the power of his might they subdued sin: they obtained dominion over it through faith in Jesus. And the same faith in the same Jesus is still mighty, through him, to obtain as great victories. The truth of his promise,

the faithfulness of the Promiser, the strength of his arm to fulfil his promise: these did not fail Moses nor Paul—never did, never can fail any believer. Thus speaketh the Lord unto them—"Sin shall not have dominion over you;" having pardoned it by my blood. I will subdue it by my Spirit: trust me, you shall find strong faith an overmatch for strong sin; because it fights in the strength of Jesus, to whom all things are possible, and who must reign till he hath put all his enemies under his feet, and sin and death shall be no more. Say it is a besetting sin: this only gives more employment for faith, and for the power of Jesus. It may be a sin of constitution, breaking out into wrath and passion, that the man has no government of himself: but the Spirit of Christ can make him a new creature, and can enable him to put off the old man with his deeds, and put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. It may be a long habit of sin; but is any thing too hard for the Lord? Has he not promised—"A new heart will I give you, and I will put my Spirit within you, and I will cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my commandments and practise them?" Wherever grace reigns, this scripture is fulfilled. The armies of the Lord of hosts fight under his banner, and no weapon formed against them can prosper—kept by his mighty power they are daily more than conquerors, marching on triumphant over all opposition: for he enables them to hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of hope firm unto the end. Thus they were commanded to pray—"Order my steps, O Lord, according to thy word, and

CHAPTER IX.

The Believer's Triumph over Death.

MAN consists of two parts—a body and a soul. The bodily life is dependent on the light and air of this world, and on the circulation which they maintain and carry on. When this connexion is broken, the body expires, it loses all sense and motion, and is dead. So the life of the soul is dependent on the light and air of the spiritual world. Jehovah in Trinity is the Creator, the only fountain of being, and there can be nothing independent of him: Christ is the light, and the Holy Spirit is the breath or air of all spiritual life, and when this connexion is broken, although the soul may exist, yet its happiness in God is broken, and at an end. Sin, that great murderer sin, brought death upon body and soul: "For as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." And we read, "The soul that sinneth it shall die:" sin separating it from its union, and thereby cutting it off from its communion, with the Father of spirits. In the moment that Adam sinned, the spiritual death took place; for he had lost the Spirit of life, and was dead in trespasses and sins: and that same moment his body became mortal, although he lived nine hundred years after. Thus we have sin, and death, and misery, entailed upon all his descendants from the first Adam, who is of the earth, earthy. O how precious to a

to the increase of my faith, and to the praise of thy promised help. Cause me to depend every moment upon it—let me experience, that when I am weakest in myself, I may be made strongest in the Lord; and when I have nothing left me to glory in of mine own, then my soul may magnify the Lord, and my spirit may rejoice in God my Saviour. Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid, because the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song: he also is become my salvation. To his grace and power be all the glory for ever and ever. Amen, and amen.

CHAPTER VII.

The Believer's Triumph over his Troubles.

After sin is pardoned, and the pardoned sinner is enabled to fight the good fight of faith against it, yet there is another enemy assaulting him to the last moment of his life. Fallen man is born to trouble. The man in Christ is so far from being exempt, that many are the troubles of the righteous. He is, in common with others, liable to pain and poverty, and to afflictions of every kind; he is by his very profession exposed to some of the most trying nature: his owning Christ—his following Christ—his conformity to Christ—give offence, provoke the malice of wicked men, and the rage of wicked spirits. Wave does not follow wave more certainly, than every day brings its fresh troubles, and forces the believer to

buried, but he rose again the third day, having loosed the bonds of death, because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. In this conflict with death and the grave, repentance was hid from his eyes. He knew what he was to go through, more than any of us can conceive of pain and agony, yet he would not change his purpose of grace, although he was to become obedient unto death, the most tormenting, the most shameful, even the death of the cross. His enemies having brought him to the grave, and sealed the sepulchre, seemed then to have him in their power. So they thought: but here Jesus made his complete and eternal triumph. By his resurrection he swallowed up death in victory: for he did not rise as a private person, but as the first fruits of the dead, drawing the joyful harvest after him. The Lord is risen indeed, the Head of the body the church; and has the power of an endless life to quicken all his members. In which most glorious prospect, the apostle, quoting the passage above mentioned, breaks out into these raptures of joy, seeing all his enemies vanquished, and nothing but bliss and glory before him—" O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law." The law armed death with its sting, as the just wages of the transgression of the law; but Jesus our surety magnified the law by his holy life in all its precepts, and by his death in all its penalties. He died for our sins, and, by his rising from the dead, he demonstrated that he had taken out its sting, and had disarmed it of its power to hurt: nay, had done much more—he had changed death into life.—" I

and, if the sufferings increase, increasing our faith and patience, until they have done their perfect work.

When, through the aids of his Spirit, these promises have their full credit, through his inward peace, which he alone can give, and which the world cannot take away—when he makes the heart to feel happy in God, enjoying the peculiar supports of the gospel, and living up to its privileges, then the believer finds the apostle's experience to be true: "Always sorrowful, yet always rejoicing;" and sometimes with a fulness of joy, according to what is written, "But now, thus saith the Lord, that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not, for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flames kindle upon thee: for I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: Fear not, for I am with thee," to support, to deliver. This is spoken to the redeemed, who are God's property, and whom he bought with a great price. What could the Lord God engage to do for them more than is here promised, in order to still all their guilty fears, and to quiet all their natural fears? Trusting to the redemption that is in the blood of the Lamb, they are under his keeping, they go out in his strength to meet their trials and their enemies. Jesus is with them, on their side; and therefore, believing in him, they need not fear any suffering. Jehovah is their Alehim, their covenant-God in Trinity, their sworn ally, engaged by his almighty arm to save them from

all evil, and to give them all possible good. "I the Lord," says he, "do keep thee—I will water thee with the dew of heaven every moment—lest any hurt thee, I will keep thee night and day." Having such great and exceeding precious promises, with what holy courage should the believer look up to a faithful God, and what strong consolation should they afford him, when he is to go through the fire, or through the water! He may sing with Jonah, "I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving—salvation is of the Lord." Or with the triumphant faith of the three children who were not afraid to go into the furnace, heated seven times hotter than usual, fully persuaded, that, whether they lived or died, Jesus would be with them. Threatened with the burning fiery furnace, if they refused to worship Nebuchadnezzar's image, "They said, O king, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter: if it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thy hand, O king." And he did; he went with them into the fire, and they walked in the midst of the flames unhurt. The same Jesus is daily repeating the same miracle. He has approved himself in all ages to be the friend of his afflicted people: whatever he sends to them, he sends it with his blessing. So they testify: "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God." They knew it by his promise, and they felt it by experience: It is good for us that we have been in trouble: we have gone through many seas and storms of affliction, and through the raging fire of persecution, not only unhurt, but benefited; for Christ was with

us. As the suffering of Christ abounded, so our consolation abounded by Christ: he feels for them, as his members, and has bowels of the tenderest compassion. In all their affliction he is afflicted. He brings in his supports, and comes with his deliverance, in the best time. He leaves no accusation of sin in the conscience, but gives and maintains a sweet peace with God. O what matter of triumph is it, when this peace rules in the heart, always and by all means testifying—"Since God is for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." Thanks without ceasing be to Jesus, the Lamb that was slain, for this complete and eternal victory over sin. The apostle carries on his praises, Romans viii. that through Jesus all outward opposition shall fall before us: "Who shall separate us from Christ's love to us: shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter: nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that hath loved us." His love is in them all—appoints them, sends them, proportions them, and they conquer them all in his strength. Not only conquer, but are more than conquerors,—they are great gainers: they gain what is better than all the world, fresh proofs of his love:

almighty to fulfil them; and almighty to enable us to believe, that he will both support and comfort. Jesus, wonderful in his person, wonderful in all his works and ways—he has changed the very nature of death: he has turned it into life. Whosoever believeth in him shall never die, but is passed already from death unto life. The Holy Spirit has put him into present possession of a life, laid up with Christ, out of the reach of death. So that when his body expires, it falls asleep in the Lord, and his spirit enters upon an eternal triumph of life and glory, among the spirits of just men made perfect.

O what a deliverance is this from the bondage of sin, and the terrors of the grave. It is the peculiar blessedness of believers in Jesus; for the natural man cannot but fear death, and look upon it as his enemy. He has no prospects but what are bounded by time. His whole happiness is in the present world, and in the enjoyment of what he calls the blessings of it. He was laying fine plans, and hoping to live to execute them—heaping up riches—living in the unrestrained liberty of sensual enjoyments—murdering his time—mispending his talents—without any concern about eternal things,—when, lo, an enemy comes, and puts an end to all his schemes! He dies. Perhaps he may be a sceptic, doubting of the certainty of a future state: he may wish there was none, but he can have no evidence; and if he continue to wish it, even to the last, O what a scene will open, when he meets a just and an angry God! He may be a materialist, and please himself with fancying, that what we call his soul, will vanish at his death into soft air: but the God of truth says, that

For the farther confirmation of our faith, he has set before us a cloud of witnesses, who testify with one voice, that he sanctified all their troubles, and turned them into covenant blessings. So one of them said—" I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth; my soul shall make her boast in the Lord: the humble shall hear thereof and be glad. O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together: I sought the Lord, and he heard, and delivered me from all my fears. The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles." Their very troubles become matter of triumph. He shut them up in the ark, and they were saved, when he drowned the world of the ungodly. Peter, speaking from experience, says, " The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of their trouble, as he did righteous Lot, when he overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah." The more the Egyptians oppressed his people the more they multiplied and grew. Behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed! The fire of persecution raged against the church, but the blood of the martyrs was fruitful, and increased it both in number and in grace. The seed of the wicked have been at enmity with the children of the promise from the beginning; but these trusted in the Captain of their salvation, and he led them on conquering and to conquer: " Through faith they subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women re-

dertook to conquer death for us, as our surety. He has done it. He has swallowed up death in victory. He has made it our friend and our benefactor; for he has engaged to support us in our last moments. He never did, he never can fail any who put their trust in him. Experience has confirmed his faithfulness in all ages. His soldiers, whom he made valiant in fight, a goodly company whom no one can number, have triumphed gloriously—before death—in death—and after death.

Before death he prepared them to meet it in faith; for the great design of his gospel is to arm them against the guilt of sin, and the terrors of death. And they are good soldiers of Christ Jesus who put on this armour—who have learned their exercise, and who, by their daily battles, keep their arms shining and bright. Looking to Jesus, the Captain of their salvation, for orders, for courage, for strength, for victory, all opposition falls before them. He enables them to fight the good fight of faith; and the more they conquer sin, the less they have to fear from death: for Christ is to them the whole armour of God, and the pieces of this armour are the graces of his Spirit. For with these the apostle says, that Christ has perfectly equipped the armies of the Lord. They have the truth of Christ, the righteousness of Christ, the peace of God in Christ, faith in Christ, the word of Christ, hope in Christ, and prayer to Christ for fresh supplies of his Spirit, that he would enable them to make such a use of their armour, that they might get the victory over sin and death, and he might get all the praise. In this holy war he is every thing to them; and they find in him, and

God sendeth us in this present time, seemeth to have no joy and comfort, but sorrow and pain; yet it bringeth with it a taste of God's mercy and goodness towards them that be so corrected, and a sure hope of God's everlasting consolation in heaven. If then these sorrows, diseases, and sicknesses, and also death itself, be nothing else but our heavenly Father's rod—whereby he certifieth us of his love and gracious favour, whereby he trieth and purifieth us, whereby he giveth unto us holiness, and certifieth us that we be his children, and he our merciful Father—shall we not then with all humility, as obedient and loving children, joyfully kiss our heavenly Father's rod, and ever say in our heart, with our Saviour Jesus Christ, Father, if this anguish and sorrow which I feel, and death which I see approach, may not pass, but that thy will is that I must suffer them, thy will be done."

O thou hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof in the time of trouble, I acknowledge my reluctance to take up thy cross, and my weakness in bearing it, hold thou me up by fresh supplies of thy Spirit, that I may be safe. Let thy strength be perfected in my weakness. Thy promises of help are exceeding great: through thee I do believe the truth of them, and I pray for grace to make a right use of them. Enable me in patience to possess my soul, that when it is thy will to try my faith, I may live up to my privileges, and may find it better to suffer with Christ than to reign with the world. O Lord, thou hast showed this favour to Moses, and thou hast done more than this:—thou hast made thy witnesses glorify thee in the fires; they have marched on fighting thy battles against hosts of foes: and they did

of life, especially of my youth: but I am to be judged by a merciful God, who is not willing to see what I have done amiss; and though of myself I have nothing to present to him but sins and misery, yet I know he looks not upon me now as I am of myself, but as I am in my Saviour, and hath given me, even at this time, some testimonies by his Holy Spirit, that I am of the number of his elect: I am therefore full of joy, and shall die in peace."

Thus the precious Jesus was, in the prospect of death, more desirable than life itself. So he was to them in dying. All these died in faith. They were his witnesses, that he kept every thing hurtful from them, and brought them in triumph to the end of their lives. That great company round his throne who are crowned conquerors, testify for him that he did not leave them, nor forsake them one moment. He kept his word with them. He smoothed their bed in their sickness. He was tender over them, and wiped away all tears from their eyes. When fainting, he gave them strong consolation. When he called them to meet death in all its terrors, to suffer in flames of fire, to be torn to pieces by wild beasts, to be tormented in every way that malice could invent, or the power of tyrants could inflict—He was with them—their Saviour and their God. The tender care of his heart, and the mighty power of his arm, were never more felt than when most wanted. He kept his peace ruling in their consciences always and by all means; and gave them to feel, that bodily pain could not lessen his love to them, nor abate or stop their love to him. I might bring a cloud of witnesses to prove the compassion

it is entirely of thy special favour that I have any good hope to come to their glory. For this, and for all thy mercies, to Thee, with the Father, and the eternal Spirit, the Three in one Jehovah, I give honour, and glory, and thanks, to-day, and I hope to do it without ceasing, for ever and ever. Amen and amen.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Believer's Triumph over the Infirmities of Old Age.

It is appointed unto all men once to die. The time is fixed by an immutable decree. "The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we flee away." If some be permitted to live longer, yet the infirmities of old age must arrive, bringing with them labour and sorrow, the forerunners of death. Circulation will become languid. The senses of the body will grow dull and heavy. The faculties of the mind will be impaired, and will discover it by not remembering proper names. In this decline of life, believers are subject to the same infirmities with other men. They have no exemption from pain, or sickness, or death; but they have that which keeps up their spirits, and makes them patient and joyful. The consolations of God are then most needed; and he has promised them, and he is faithful: he never failed them who trusted in him. He

When I contemplate the holiness of God, I cannot but cry out, that I myself am vile, most vile: and then, when I consider the justice of God, could any one imagine, but that I should be struck with the most dreadful apprehensions of approaching judgment and deserved wrath? Instead of that, I am under no fear of the latter, and much desire the former. I long to appear before this holy just God: I have a righteousness to plead that is perfect. The holy Jesus is my security; and I cannot be disappointed. In Christ, the justice of God is as much my security as his mercy: here is a holiness that transcends that of all the angelic host. There is no charging my Redeemer with possible folly: O, I know I am pardoned for the sake of Jesus Christ, my only Lord and Mediator: I am sure of it: I am fully, freely pardoned: I shall soon be thoroughly sanctified and fitted for glory. O, I want words to express my gratitude, to tell my joy: adored be God, my Lord, my Saviour! this is the work of God alone: O unfathomable love, infinite condescension, unmerited, unbounded grace to a vile offender! I deserve hell; I enjoy heaven."

O thou that readest this honourable mention of the love of Jesus to his dying followers, may it be given thee to find him near to thee in that time of need! If thy faith be in him, doubt not. Take courage, and live up to thy privileges. Regard his promise. Observe his faithfulness to it. Depend upon his arm. Trust in him, and be not afraid. Since he has overcome death, why shouldst thou fear that it will overcome thee? Is not his victory thine? Whatever thou feelest in thyself—if nature

for his God is their God; the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, to young and old, who put their trust in him. His promise to the Israel of God cannot be broken. Thus he pledges his word of truth to them, giving them a warrant to pray unto him—"My mouth shall be filled with thy praise, and with thy honour all the day long: for thou wilt not cast me off in the time of old age, thou wilt not forsake me when my strength faileth." To this prayer the Lord inclined his ear, and vouchsafed this gracious answer—"Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel; which are borne by me from the belly, which are carried from the womb, and even to your old age, I am he; and even to hoary hairs I will carry you: I have made and I will bear you, even I will carry and I will deliver you." These are some of his rich cordials for the aged. He provided them in his love, and he is sensibly touched with the feeling of their infirmities in administering them; for he himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses. His compassions bind him to comfort and relieve his old disciples: and when they apply to him in time of need, he is ever present to grant them his promised help: yea, so suited to their case, as to make them grow in grace as they grow in years. They bring forth fruit in their old age—the rich fruit of humility, and the ripe fruit of thankfulness; fruit that endureth unto everlasting life. We have a happy instance of this in God's goodness to an ancient believer, who lived to be a hundred and seventy-five years old. He was the friend of God, who had blessed Abraham through life, and that in all things; and who

could him. And I not only hope to be raised from the grave, but I shall be brought out of it in triumph on that day of wonders, when Jesus Christ, the great God and our Saviour, shall change this my vile body, and shall make it like unto his own most glorious body. O what a change! O what a miracle! This very body, which is now sinful dust, shall be like the Son of God, who is the standard of all perfection—even this body of mine shall be conformed to his most glorious body: although it be now a house, so infected with the leprosy of sin, that it must be taken down, yet out of its ruins will the Lord raise it a monument to his eternal praise, even a habitation of God by his Spirit. Come then, thou blessed of the Lord: O welcome, welcome death!—thou art the smiling messenger from my Jesus, bringing with thee glad tidings of great joy—of a salvation secured from all possible evil, and the enjoyment of all possible good. In sure and certain hope of this complete and eternal salvation, I resign my body into thy hands, thou Lord of life, and Giver of glory—I intrust it with thee to be kept against that day, when all that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this prospect, for believing views of it, for the earnest, and for some little foretaste of it, to the Eternal Three be eternal praise. Amen.

Such are the hopes of a real Christian, which he is warranted, which he is commanded to entertain in the hour of death, which God in his infinite grace actually favours his people with, to the strengthening of their faith, and to the silencing of unbelievers. Never did he display his faithfulness more signally

heir of the same promise with his father, that he died, in the same faith, an old man. He was tried with many infirmities, but we read of no complaints, though he was a hundred and eighty years of age. He expired in praise and thankfulness; satisfied with life, and happy in the prospect beyond death. And his son Jacob, a hundred and forty-seven years old, when he was dying, declared that he had waited for the salvation of God—waiting faith is strong faith—and after he had blessed his children, and had given commandment concerning his bones, he quietly, as if he had been going to sleep, gathered up his feet into the bed, and died in peace, an old man and satisfied. All these lived in the world, strangers and pilgrims, looking for a city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God: and they were not disappointed of their hope; they all died in faith—in an act of faith, and were gathered to their people, to the general assembly and church of the first-born. When they came to the end of their faith, they came to heaven. The moment they expired, they entered the city which God had prepared for them: and their bodies, sleeping in the dust, are in the covenant of life, and shall be raised and glorified in the morning of the resurrection. For our Lord proves that the dead shall rise from this very circumstance: he says to the Jews—"Have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob: he is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living." In this faith the patriarchs died: being children of the resurrection, they left their bodies in the hand and care of

CHAPTER X.

The Character of the Persons who have most reason to Triumph in Christ.

THEY are such as know most of themselves, and have seen the deepest into the mystery of iniquity. The Holy Spirit has convinced them of sin—of original sin, the fountain from which all the streams flow of actual sin in thought, word, and deed. In this conviction he has put life and power: it is far more than a moral persuasion—he makes it practical and abiding: for the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus quickens the dead sinner, and, making him free from the law of sin and of death, gives him the faith of God's elect; and by the daily use and exercise of that faith, makes him more sensible of his obligations to Jesus. In every act of faith, he leads the believer out of self to the Saviour—humbles him, that he may exalt Christ—empties him of self, that he may fill him with the good things of Christ—casts down, and keeps down, every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and brings into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. In his hand, and by his blessing, this work prospers. The loftiness of man is humbled, and the haughtiness of man is bowed down, and Jehovah alone is exalted in that day; according to the oracle of truth —"He shall glorify me"—which is the office of the Holy Spirit to testify of Christ, and to glorify

by many things are removed, which before obstructed the growth of the spiritual life. Now is the time to learn to walk by faith, and not by sense. A believer young in years, and young in experience, is often tempted to judge of himself by his feelings, more than by the word of God. In a good frame he is a good believer. Then all is well with him. But when he is walking in darkness, he is very apt to question his state—If all be right with me, why am I thus?—my present frame is very dull and uncomfortable—I am not so lively as I used to be in prayer, or in ordinances—my delight in God, and the things of God, is far short of what it was formerly—perhaps I have been deceiving myself, and crying, Peace, peace, when there was no peace for me.

From this temptation age itself is a sort of deliverance: self-activity is weakened, and thereby, through grace, self-dependence. The believer, if he be a good scholar, will now learn to walk more by faith, and less by sight. The vigour of his senses is decaying. The high spirits of youth are abating. His present lesson is very plain and simple; and while he attends to what is passing in him, and about him, he has a thousand monitors, calling upon him now to learn and practise a perfect dependence on those things which are always one and the same, without any variableness, or the least shadow of turning. One record of God. One Saviour. One Spirit. One faith, of which the Saviour is the author and the finisher. This faith is made to grow and flourish, as there is less dependence on other things: and as age itself tends to weaken this dependence, it becomes, in the hand of the Holy Spirit, a favourable

that could be given him for promoting God's glory and his own happiness. He was bound to perfect and continual obedience to it, and was left to his own will and power, that he should not offend in any one point: but upon his transgression he became liable to suffer the threatened pains and penalties of the broken law. Every right view of himself in this state ought to humble and to abase the sinner, and it effectually does when the conviction is from God. He then finds that his nature was earthly, sensual; and having not the Spirit, it was alienated from the life of God. All his thoughts and actions were not only irregular, but also contrary to the holy law. His very imagination was evil, only evil, and that continually. His understanding was not only ignorant of spiritual things, but was darkness itself. His will was a rebel. His affections apostate, ever at enmity with God. Misery and destruction were in his ways: of the way of peace he had no knowledge, neither was there any fear of God before his eyes: for although death and hell were threatened, and were ready to give him the just wages of his iniquity, yet he was kept careless and secure. Like the atheists of old, when warned of their approaching destruction by the prophet—"Let us eat and drink," say they, "for to-morrow we shall die."

This true knowledge of the exceeding evil of sin, and the right humiliation for it, come by believing, and are the genuine fruits and effects of it. Legal conviction has guilt and bondage in it, and worketh sorrow unto death. But this conviction of the Holy Spirit reveals the remedy along with the disease, and produces such a repentance as is not to be repented

in God, he has patience given him to bear his sufferings, and grace to profit from them; yea, the peace of God rules in his heart always, and by all means.

An old man with this peace, which surpasseth all understanding, ruling in his heart, will be so far from complaining, that he has every thing to be thankful for, which can render him blessed of the Lord. He is provided with an infallible antidote against all that old age can try him with:—It is true, I have an infirm body, but, thank God, I have a sound mind: age has brought upon me great weakness, but this makes more room for the power of God, that it may be perfected in my weakness. I have many pains, but not so many as he has comforts to give me: in the worst of them he keeps me patient. Father, thy will be done—I have an afflicted body, but I have a happy heart: although the outward man be perishing, yet I faint not; because the inward man is renewed day by day. My supports are great; the consolations of God not a few. I feel the symptoms of old age warning me daily of my approaching dissolution: through grace I take the warning—they find me living, and I hope they will find me dying, in the faith of the Son of God. The earthly tabernacle is taking down, but he does it with much tenderness and love, and assures me, that he has prepared for me a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. May he who keeps it for me, and me for it, never leave me nor forsake me, till I be with him, where he is, and be like him, and enjoy him for ever and ever! Yet a very, very little while—hold on faith and patience—and I shall see Jesus in his glory, which is the heaven of heavens.

I was even as others once—by nature a child of wrath, and an heir of misery. I was going on in the broad way of destruction, careless and secure—and I am quite astonished to see the danger that I was in. I trembled to behold the precipice which I was ready to fall over, when Jesus opened mine eyes, and by the light of his word and Spirit, showed me my guilt and my danger, and put it into my heart to flee from the wrath to come. O what a most merciful escape! I cannot think of it without adoring the compassionate Saviour, who remembered me in my low estate; for his mercy endureth for ever: and hath redeemed me from the hand of all mine enemies; for his mercy endureth for ever. Not unto me, not unto me, in the least, but to the superabounding grace of my God be all the glory. That the Father would make me an object of his choice and love—that Jesus Emmanuel would humble himself to be manifest in the flesh, and be obedient unto death, for me and for my salvation—that the Holy Ghost would give me a new birth into the spiritual world, and would quicken me into union with Jesus, and to the enjoyment of the Father's love in him,—adored for ever and ever be the holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity. That such a filthy sinner should be cleansed from all sin—that such an ungodly creature should be freely justified by grace—that such a miserable sinner should be blessed with all spiritual blessings—that such a weak creature should be strengthened mightily by the Spirit in the inner man, and when weakest in myself, then to be strongest in the Lord—O what riches! what unsearchable riches of grace are these! Abide with

CHAPTER IX.

The Believer's Triumph over Death.

MAN consists of two parts—a body and a soul. The bodily life is dependent on the light and air of this world, and on the circulation which they maintain and carry on. When this connexion is broken, the body expires, it loses all sense and motion, and is dead. So the life of the soul is dependent on the light and air of the spiritual world. Jehovah in Trinity is the Creator, the only fountain of being, and there can be nothing independent of him: Christ is the light, and the Holy Spirit is the breath or air of all spiritual life, and when this connexion is broken, although the soul may exist, yet its happiness in God is broken, and at an end. Sin, that great murderer sin, brought death upon body and soul: "For as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." And we read, "The soul that sinneth it shall die:" sin separating it from its union, and thereby cutting it off from its communion, with the Father of spirits. In the moment that Adam sinned, the spiritual death took place; for he had lost the Spirit of life, and was dead in trespasses and sins: and that same moment his body became mortal, although he lived nine hundred years after. Thus we have sin, and death, and misery, entailed upon all his descendants from the first Adam, who is of the earth, earthy. O how precious to a

Romans chap. vii. not only confesses that he had nature and grace in him at the same time, but also describes it at full length. Indwelling sin was his continual grief, and his heavy burden: an apostle in Christ, and yet he felt the plague of his own heart: and it was his daily cross, which he was forced to bear; and his constant enemy, against which he was always at war—no peace, no truce could be made. The flesh was ever lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these two with such unceasing opposition night and day, that he could not do the things that he would, either so continually or so perfectly. He describes this battle as it was carried on in his own experience, the two combatants striving in him for mastery. He was a good soldier of Jesus Christ, and as well instructed and armed as ever any believer was for this warfare, having on the whole armour of God: and yet, wearied with this daily conflict, he is forced to cry out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" He had no deliverance in or from himself: it was against himself that he fought, and of himself he was led to despair. But looking to Jesus he takes courage, assuring himself of a complete victory, and of an everlasting triumph in the Captain of his salvation—"I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.—So then," (this is the conclusion of the whole matter,) "so then with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin."

This is still the experience of every true believer, at all times, and upon all occasions: he has a practical *comment* upon the seventh chapter of the Romans

buried, but he rose again the third day, having loosed the bonds of death, because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. In this conflict with death and the grave, repentance was hid from his eyes. He knew what he was to go through, more than any of us can conceive of pain and agony, yet he would not change his purpose of grace, although he was to become obedient unto death, the most tormenting, the most shameful, even the death of the cross. His enemies having brought him to the grave, and sealed the sepulchre, seemed then to have him in their power. So they thought: but here Jesus made his complete and eternal triumph. By his resurrection he swallowed up death in victory: for he did not rise as a private person, but as the first fruits of the dead, drawing the joyful harvest after him. The Lord is risen indeed, the Head of the body the church; and has the power of an endless life to quicken all his members. In which most glorious prospect, the apostle, quoting the passage above mentioned, breaks out into these raptures of joy, seeing all his enemies vanquished, and nothing but bliss and glory before him—" O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law." The law armed death with its sting, as the just wages of the transgression of the law; but Jesus our surety magnified the law by his holy life in all its precepts, and by his death in all its penalties. He died for our sins, and, by his rising from the dead, he demonstrated that he had taken out its sting, and had disarmed it of its power to hurt: nay, had done much more—he had changed death into life.—" I

incense for their acceptance, and through his intercession, and through that only, he may obtain an answer of grace.

Neither can he trust in his praises any more than in his prayers. Let him praise ever so much, and ever so well, yet he can make no suitable acknowledgments for the blessing of creation. Once he was nothing: for his being at all—for such a being, rather than any other—for being made a man, and at first highly favoured with the image and friendship of God—who can express the noble acts of the Lord, or show forth all his praise for the miracle of creation? But who can conceive how great, how endless are the blessings of the new creation? For they are all gifts of God's grace—distinguishing and sovereign—given to sinners as sinners—to the chief of sinners—continued to the unworthy—increased to the unthankful—how great in their nature—how invaluable the sum of them! The believer, deeply impressed with these sentiments, acknowledges that he is less than the least of all God's mercies; yea, he is sensible that he deserves the heaviest of the divine vengeance: so that his prayer, "God be merciful to me a sinner," lays the foundation of his very best praises. He who has most forgiven will love most. He who feels what he really is among the chief of sinners, will be among the chief of those worshippers who ascribe all their salvation to God and the Lamb. The humblest among them will feel that they have most reason to be thankful. But still their praises are no payment. They must receive fresh grace to praise with, and more grace to praise better. The debt increases by the addition

with him, interested in him, and so closely joined to him, as the members are to the head, as to be a real partaker of all that he did upon earth, and of all that he is now doing for his redeemed in heaven. He has a good warrant, for he is not only permitted, but also commanded, to apply to himself all the privileges and blessings which are contained in this large charter of grace: "Ye are complete in Christ, who is the head of all principality and power: in whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us; and he took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in that same cross." In this view of the almighty Conqueror of all our enemies, and of his enabling us, also, by faith to come after him, conquering and to conquer, what thanks and praises should be given unto him! There is no possible evil, but he has removed it from us; and no possible good, but he has obtained the right, and gives the possession. We are complete in him, our Head:—completely circumcised in heart by his circumcision, so as to put off the body of sin; and risen indeed with him by the faith of his own operation, through which we have

gladly partake of the fruits and blessings of this union by communion with Christ, by receiving the bread of life, and the cup of salvation, according to Christ's holy institution. He comes in faith to eat the flesh of Christ, and to drink his blood in grateful remembrance of him—according as he hath been taught—The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for me, preserve my body and soul unto eternal life—I take and I eat this bread, and I take and I drink this cup, in remembrance that Christ died for me, and I desire to feed on him in my heart by faith with thanksgiving. In this service he would have his whole soul engaged, that nothing might interrupt his communion with his beloved. But vain thoughts which lodge within him, will break out. They intrude, although most unwelcome guests, into this banquet of love: so that he is constrained to cry out, Lord Jesus, pardon the failings of my holy things: I come to the throne of thy grace, that I may obtain mercy, and may find more grace to help me in every time of need.

When he is led to consider what is the cause of all these failings, O what an abiding lesson of humility has he to learn! He sees that they all spring from the bitter root of unbelief, and are the fruits of remaining corruption; which can only be kept down, and conquered, as the strength of Christ apprehended by faith prevails over them. Self, pride, legality, nurse them: they have their being, their activity, their power, from those fleshly lusts which war against the soul, and render the whole life of the believer one continued act of self-denial. He *has still a body* of sin, with all its members mixing

almighty to fulfil them; and almighty to enable us to believe, that he will both support and comfort. Jesus, wonderful in his person, wonderful in all his works and ways—he has changed the very nature of death: he has turned it into life. Whosoever believeth in him shall never die, but is passed already from death unto life. The Holy Spirit has put him into present possession of a life, laid up with Christ, out of the reach of death. So that when his body expires, it falls asleep in the Lord, and his spirit enters upon an eternal triumph of life and glory, among the spirits of just men made perfect.

O what a deliverance is this from the bondage of sin, and the terrors of the grave. It is the peculiar blessedness of believers in Jesus; for the natural man cannot but fear death, and look upon it as his enemy. He has no prospects but what are bounded by time. His whole happiness is in the present world, and in the enjoyment of what he calls the blessings of it. He was laying fine plans, and hoping to live to execute them—heaping up riches—living in the unrestrained liberty of sensual enjoyments—murdering his time—mispending his talents—without any concern about eternal things,—when, lo, an enemy comes, and puts an end to all his schemes! He dies. Perhaps he may be a sceptic, doubting of the certainty of a future state: he may wish there was none, but he can have no evidence; and if he continue to wish it, even to the last, O what a scene will open, when he meets a just and an angry God! He may be a materialist, and please himself with fancying, that what we call his soul, will vanish at his death into soft air: but the God of truth says, that

weary of his praises, although they fall far short of what such a Saviour deserves, and of what he would acknowledge with all possible gratitude: because he falls short, he aims higher. He feels himself under infinite obligations to the Father for his love, to the Son for his salvation; and by the supply of the Spirit's grace he is made sensible, that he is not only less than the least of divine mercies, but if he had his just deserts, he should have judgment without mercy. This lays the foundation for his highest praises. The faithful witness for Jesus makes the believer willing to be beholden to him for every mercy; yea, to glory in being a pensioner upon his fulness; from which he receives grace for grace, that in all things he may be giving of thanks: according to the Lord's favour to his people, informing them to take with them words, and turn to the Lord, and say unto him, "Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously, so will we render the calves of our lips;" which is the sacrifice of the New Testament worshippers, who, through Jesus the Mediator, offer the sacrifice of praise continually—that is, the fruit of their lips, giving thanks to his name: wishing, praying to do it with some of the praises of heaven; as one said, "I will hope continually, and I will yet praise thee more and more."

As these prayers and praises are grounded upon faith in the divine promises, this makes the believer a diligent reader of the Scriptures. He does not neglect his Bible, because he has not yet attained the perfect knowledge of every part of it. For that very reason he studies it more; he prays more over it, grows more thankful for the divine power which

dertook to conquer death for us, as our surety. He has done it. He has swallowed up death in victory. He has made it our friend and our benefactor; for he has engaged to support us in our last moments. He never did, he never can fail any who put their trust in him. Experience has confirmed his faithfulness in all ages. His soldiers, whom he made valiant in fight, a goodly company whom no one can number, have triumphed gloriously—before death—in death—and after death.

Before death he prepared them to meet it in faith; for the great design of his gospel is to arm them against the guilt of sin, and the terrors of death. And they are good soldiers of Christ Jesus who put on this armour—who have learned their exercise, and who, by their daily battles, keep their arms shining and bright. Looking to Jesus, the Captain of their salvation, for orders, for courage, for strength, for victory, all opposition falls before them. He enables them to fight the good fight of faith; and the more they conquer sin, the less they have to fear from death: for Christ is to them the whole armour of God, and the pieces of this armour are the graces of his Spirit. For with these the apostle says, that Christ has perfectly equipped the armies of the Lord. They have the truth of Christ, the righteousness of Christ, the peace of God in Christ, faith in Christ, the word of Christ, hope in Christ, and prayer to Christ for fresh supplies of his Spirit, that he would enable them to make such a use of their armour, that they might get the victory over sin and death, and he might get all the praise. In this holy war he is every thing to them; and they find in him, and

humble in the use of the means: and thus he learns to live more by faith upon Christ, and to seek more close communion with him and his fulness, especially at his table. He does not absent himself from it, because he has not the fellowship there, so close, intimate, and abiding as he could wish, or because the last time he was there he was not so lively as he used to be, or because he was unworthy, and full of complaints. He has tasted that the Lord is gracious, and this taste has increased his hunger and thirst: the food which he wants he does not carry with him, but he goes to receive it. When he hears his Lord's command—Take, eat this bread—drink this cup—do ye this in remembrance of me,—he obeys, believing the promise: This is my body given for you; this is my blood shed for you. The more faith in the promise, there will be the more appetite, and the more nourishment received from the spiritual food; for then the Holy Spirit puts his influence into the elements, and the communicant eats the flesh of Christ indeed, and drinks his blood indeed; having by faith communion with him in the bread and wine. At this table the believer is fed, nourished, and feasted, with the bread that cometh down from heaven, even angel's food. For he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever; according to the Lord's own promise, "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day." The believer has this in his eye, both in what the banquet is now, and in what it is the pledge and earnest of, when it shall be realized. Faith gives a substance to the things promised and hoped for. It has the earnest and the

of life, especially of my youth: but I am to be judged by a merciful God, who is not willing to see what I have done amiss; and though of myself I have nothing to present to him but sins and misery, yet I know he looks not upon me now as I am of myself, but as I am in my Saviour, and hath given me, even at this time, some testimonies by his Holy Spirit, that I am of the number of his elect: I am therefore full of joy, and shall die in peace."

Thus the precious Jesus was, in the prospect of death, more desirable than life itself. So he was to them in dying. All these died in faith. They were his witnesses, that he kept every thing hurtful from them, and brought them in triumph to the end of their lives. That great company round his throne who are crowned conquerors, testify for him that he did not leave them, nor forsake them one moment. He kept his word with them. He smoothed their bed in their sickness. He was tender over them, and wiped away all tears from their eyes. When fainting, he gave them strong consolation. When he called them to meet death in all its terrors, to suffer in flames of fire, to be torn to pieces by wild beasts, to be tormented in every way that malice could invent, or the power of tyrants could inflict—He was with them—their Saviour and their God. The tender care of his heart, and the mighty power of his arm, were never more felt than when most wanted. He kept his peace ruling in their consciences always and by all means; and gave them to feel, that bodily pain could not lessen his love to them, nor abate or stop their love to him. I might bring a cloud of witnesses to prove the compassion

neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest." And he went out strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. He fought the Lord's battles and prospered, until the whole land was subdued before him. There failed not ought of any good thing which the Lord had spoken to the house of Israel—all came to pass. Even so shall it be to the whole Israel of God. Every good soldier of Christ Jesus shall be kept safe by his almighty power, and under his banner shall fight the good fight of faith, until he obtain the promised inheritance, which is incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for them. He has taken possession of it in their name, as their surety, and not one of them can perish; for he keeps the inheritance for them, and them for it: yea, the day is hastening on, when he will present all his redeemed unto the Father. "Of those whom thou hast given me have I lost none; behold I, and the children whom thou hast given me."

On all these accounts it is evident, that a believer every day, and in every thing, finds matter for the deepest humiliation. He has still a body of sin, remaining corruptions, daily infirmities, and shortcomings. All that he has of his own abases him in his own eyes; so that his triumph is never in himself. His salvation, with all its graces and blessings, depends entirely upon what he is in Christ. On this foundation he may rest safely always, notwithstanding he has nothing of his own to glory in. Most of his mistakes and miseries come from his seeking to be independent of Christ—hoping to find that in himself, or in the world, which is only in

When I contemplate the holiness of God, I cannot but cry out, that I myself am vile, most vile: and then, when I consider the justice of God, could any one imagine, but that I should be struck with the most dreadful apprehensions of approaching judgment and deserved wrath? Instead of that, I am under no fear of the latter, and much desire the former. I long to appear before this holy just God: I have a righteousness to plead that is perfect. The holy Jesus is my security; and I cannot be disappointed. In Christ, the justice of God is as much my security as his mercy: here is a holiness that transcends that of all the angelic host. There is no charging my Redeemer with possible folly: O, I know I am pardoned for the sake of Jesus Christ, my only Lord and Mediator: I am sure of it: I am fully, freely pardoned: I shall soon be thoroughly sanctified and fitted for glory. O, I want words to express my gratitude, to tell my joy: adored be God, my Lord, my Saviour! this is the work of God alone: O unfathomable love, infinite condescension, unmerited, unbounded grace to a vile offender! I deserve hell; I enjoy heaven."

O thou that readest this honourable mention of the love of Jesus to his dying followers, may it be given thee to find him near to thee in that time of need! If thy faith be in him, doubt not. Take courage, and live up to thy privileges. Regard his promise. Observe his faithfulness to it. Depend upon his arm. Trust in him, and be not afraid. Since he has overcome death, why shouldst thou fear that it will overcome thee? Is not his victory thine? Whatever thou feelest in thyself—if nature

boast of: yet even in this continual warfare between the flesh and the Spirit, in Christ Jesus he may rejoice even to a triumph, a jubilee of joy. But the grand triumph is yet to come. The best glorying in the Lord here is only a prelude to it. Now we have the espousals with our heavenly Bridegroom, but then the marriage will be consummated. Now we are kept waiting in hope for the crown of righteousness, but that will be our coronation day. What a day will it be! What wonders and miracles! The promises, exceeding great and exceeding precious, will then have their full and everlasting accomplishment by a faithful God, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them who have believed. When they shall see him face to face—shall be with him where he is—shall be like him, and made capable of enjoying the honours, and riches, and pleasures of his kingdom, in their fulness of blessedness for evermore.

CHAPTER XI.

The Eternal Triumph.

This is the great lesson which the believer is learning, till he comes to the end of his faith—what is promised him, and what he hopes to be at the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the centre to which all his experience tends; and, while he keeps it in view, it so enlivens and animates his prospect, that come what may, he goes on his way

could him. And I not only hope to be raised from the grave, but I shall be brought out of it in triumph on that day of wonders, when Jesus Christ, the great God and our Saviour, shall change this my vile body, and shall make it like unto his own most glorious body. O what a change! O what a miracle! This very body, which is now sinful dust, shall be like the Son of God, who is the standard of all perfection—even this body of mine shall be conformed to his most glorious body: although it be now a house, so infected with the leprosy of sin, that it must be taken down, yet out of its ruins will the Lord raise it a monument to his eternal praise, even a habitation of God by his Spirit. Come then, thou blessed of the Lord: O welcome, welcome death!—thou art the smiling messenger from my Jesus, bringing with thee glad tidings of great joy—of a salvation secured from all possible evil, and the enjoyment of all possible good. In sure and certain hope of this complete and eternal salvation, I resign my body into thy hands, thou Lord of life, and Giver of glory—I intrust it with thee to be kept against that day, when all that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this prospect, for believing views of it, for the earnest, and for some little foretaste of it, to the Eternal Three be eternal praise. Amen.

Such are the hopes of a real Christian, which he is warranted, which he is commanded to entertain in the hour of death, which God in his infinite grace actually favours his people with, to the strengthening of their faith, and to the silencing of unbelievers. Never did he display his faithfulness more signally

than in our times. Many instances might be given, but I select one, who thus expressed himself to his friends surrounding his death-bed:—

"My soul is abundantly comforted and refreshed: my body is dying, but my mind is still vigorous and alive. I feel the cold hand of death is actually upon me; and you may feel it too, if you touch my feet and legs: they are once more clay. Blessed be God, death is no king of terrors to me. He is a welcome messenger, because sent by my heavenly Father. Here I am, O Lord, waiting thy pleasure; ready to obey the summons: thy will, O Lord, be done. Blessed be God that the attack is made below: my head is as yet very clear, and untouched; and till my heart feels the damp, I hope to be engaged in work suitable to a death-bed. It is not to me a bed of languishing or wasting: this poor remainder of a body is hardly capable of any greater decay, till it moulders in the grave; and there let it moulder. Who would not part with it as it is? It is now my burden, my bar to happiness, a hinderance to a lively spiritual communion with God. But, O my friends, it is united to Christ, and shall therefore one day become a glorious body. This corruption shall put on incorruption, and shall be for ever with the Lord." Thanks be to God for such a witness —may my latter end be like his!

CHAPTER X.

The Character of the Persons who have most reason to Triumph in Christ.

THEY are such as know most of themselves, and have seen the deepest into the mystery of iniquity. The Holy Spirit has convinced them of sin—of original sin, the fountain from which all the streams flow of actual sin in thought, word, and deed. In this conviction he has put life and power: it is far more than a moral persuasion—he makes it practical and abiding: for the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus quickens the dead sinner, and, making him free from the law of sin and of death, gives him the faith of God's elect; and by the daily use and exercise of that faith, makes him more sensible of his obligations to Jesus. In every act of faith, he leads the believer out of self to the Saviour—humbles him, that he may exalt Christ—empties him of self, that he may fill him with the good things of Christ—casts down, and keeps down, every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and brings into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. In his hand, and by his blessing, this work prospers. The loftiness of man is humbled, and the haughtiness of man is bowed down, and Jehovah alone is exalted in that day; according to the oracle of truth —"He shall glorify me"—which is the office of the Holy Spirit to testify of Christ, and to glorify

to serve him without fear on earth, and to bless him for giving them freedom to come to Sion, to the city of the living God, with songs of gratitude and praise: they have everlasting joy upon their heads—crowned conquerors: they have the joys of heaven, and the gladness of eternity in their hearts, which exclude all pain, and all sorrow—no fear can enter there; not one sigh. The Lord himself is their portion, and they shall reign with him for ever and ever.

The beloved John was favoured with a view of the same eternal conquest, which the ransomed of the Lord shall have over all their enemies, and he speaks of it thus: "And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more curse, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away: and he that sat upon the throne said, Behold I make all things new." This is Jesus, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, who reigneth the Lord God Omnipotent for this very purpose, that this scripture may be fulfilled to the uttermost, and to eternity. He was the Word made flesh, who tabernacled amongst us, being that most holy temple which God pitched, and not man; out of whose fulness believers receive all grace and all glory. The compassions of Jesus are like himself, infinite and endless. He loves his redeemed too well to let either sin or sorrow come near them. They might have been holy mourners in their pilgrimage,

that could be given him for promoting God's glory and his own happiness. He was bound to perfect and continual obedience to it, and was left to his own will and power, that he should not offend in any one point: but upon his transgression he became liable to suffer the threatened pains and penalties of the broken law. Every right view of himself in this state ought to humble and to abase the sinner, and it effectually does when the conviction is from God. He then finds that his nature was earthly, sensual; and having not the Spirit, it was alienated from the life of God. All his thoughts and actions were not only irregular, but also contrary to the holy law. His very imagination was evil, only evil, and that continually. His understanding was not only ignorant of spiritual things, but was darkness itself. His will was a rebel. His affections apostate, ever at enmity with God. Misery and destruction were in his ways: of the way of peace he had no knowledge, neither was there any fear of God before his eyes: for although death and hell were threatened, and were ready to give him the just wages of his iniquity, yet he was kept careless and secure. Like the atheists of old, when warned of their approaching destruction by the prophet—"Let us eat and drink," say they, "for to-morrow we shall die."

This true knowledge of the exceeding evil of sin, and the right humiliation for it, come by believing, and are the genuine fruits and effects of it. Legal conviction has guilt and bondage in it, and worketh sorrow unto death. But this conviction of the Holy Spirit reveals the remedy along with the disease, and produces such a repentance as is not to be repented

fect peace; no evil, no fear of evil, shall for one moment interrupt the happiness of his subjects. But what is this compared to the actual enjoyment of all possible good? who is able to declare fully what this will be at the appearing of Jesus the great God? We must wait for the full manifestation of the sons of God! But yet there is a great deal revealed, which belongs to us and to our children; and if we can read it in faith, with prayer, and with a continual dependence upon the teaching and application of the Holy Spirit; he will give us to form our hearts and lives upon the certainty of what he has revealed: for our conversation will then be in heaven, and we shall have both the knowledge, and also the experience of heavenly things, growing according to our faith. The word *revelation*, signifies taking off the veil or covering from any thing, that it may be seen clearly: in the Scripture sense, it is removing the veil from heavenly things; which is the work of the Holy Spirit, creating spiritual senses to exercise upon these heavenly things, of which the natural man can have no just ideas: for he cannot understand nor receive the things that are freely given to us of God: but he that is taught of God, has evidence given him of the reality and of the blessedness of those things which are revealed, and by faith enjoyed. When such a one reads what God said to Abraham, "After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not Abram, I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward;" he reads it for himself—he makes the promise his own, and trusts in it as steadfastly as if God had spoken it to him by a voice from heaven; for so is he warranted to apply it

I was even as others once—by nature a child of wrath, and an heir of misery. I was going on in the broad way of destruction, careless and secure—and I am quite astonished to see the danger that I was in. I trembled to behold the precipice which I was ready to fall over, when Jesus opened mine eyes, and by the light of his word and Spirit, showed me my guilt and my danger, and put it into my heart to flee from the wrath to come. O what a most merciful escape! I cannot think of it without adoring the compassionate Saviour, who remembered me in my low estate; for his mercy endureth for ever: and hath redeemed me from the hand of all mine enemies; for his mercy endureth for ever. Not unto me, not unto me, in the least, but to the superabounding grace of my God be all the glory. That the Father would make me an object of his choice and love—that Jesus Emmanuel would humble himself to be manifest in the flesh, and be obedient unto death, for me and for my salvation—that the Holy Ghost would give me a new birth into the spiritual world, and would quicken me into union with Jesus, and to the enjoyment of the Father's love in him,—adored for ever and ever be the holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity. That such a filthy sinner should be cleansed from all sin—that such an ungodly creature should be freely justified by grace—that such a miserable sinner should be blessed with all spiritual blessings—that such a weak creature should be strengthened mightily by the Spirit in the inner man, and when weakest in myself, then to be strongest in the Lord—O what riches! what unsearchable riches of grace are these! Abide with

the Holy Spirit, a habitation of God through the Spirit, and through Jesus unto the Father, and in this holy and blessed communion, finding an eternal heaven of happiness, an exceeding great reward. When it is received in this its fulness, it is a reward; but of grace, a gift of sovereign mercy—great, something worthy of the great God—like himself—exceeding great, eternally great. O Holy Ghost, keep the hope of it lively! O make it every day more lively, till, through thy blessing, I come to know it as it is!

The Psalmist, speaking of this happiness, suits his description to our present method of understanding spiritual things, as they are imaged to us by material. The pleasures of our senses are made use of to give us ideas of that happiness which is to be found in God; for it is all in him: he is heaven. The enjoyment of him in glory is the heaven of heavens. "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness: for thou wilt show me the path of life; in thy presence is the fulness of joy, and at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." All this, great and endless as it is, belongs to them who have God for their God: for when they are admitted into his presence, they shall be made like him. O marvellous change!—capable of enjoying him, so as to be quite satisfied—finding in him a fulness of joy—pleasures divinely great, abundant, a river of pleasures—yea, a fountain of pleasures springing up into everlasting life. Every sense shall be gratified to the uttermost, and that for evermore. Blessed be God for this unspeakable gift: and has he not herein

Romans chap. vii. not only confesses that he had nature and grace in him at the same time, but also describes it at full length. Indwelling sin was his continual grief, and his heavy burden: an apostle in Christ, and yet he felt the plague of his own heart: and it was his daily cross, which he was forced to bear; and his constant enemy, against which he was always at war—no peace, no truce could be made. The flesh was ever lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these two with such unceasing opposition night and day, that he could not do the things that he would, either so continually or so perfectly. He describes this battle as it was carried on in his own experience, the two combatants striving in him for mastery. He was a good soldier of Jesus Christ, and as well instructed and armed as ever any believer was for this warfare, having on the whole armour of God: and yet, wearied with this daily conflict, he is forced to cry out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" He had no deliverance in or from himself: it was against himself that he fought, and of himself he was led to despair. But looking to Jesus he takes courage, assuring himself of a complete victory, and of an everlasting triumph in the Captain of his salvation—"I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.—So then," (this is the conclusion of the whole matter,) "so then with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin."

This is still the experience of every true believer, at all times, and upon all occasions: he has a practical comment upon the seventh chapter of the Romans

in his own bosom: he has heartfelt experience of the warfare between the flesh and the Spirit: he finds it hard fighting; harder, because it is continual—it will never cease so long as flesh is flesh; that is, so long as the believer lives in the body and in the present world. Indwelling sin never rests—it is like the troubled sea, always casting up its filthy motions, and then the most troublesome when he would be the freest from them. O what humbling lessons does he learn in all his approaches to God! he knows his privileges, and he wishes to live up to them, but he cannot. When he would draw near to God in the prayer of faith, the Spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. On his bended knees desiring to confess his sins, and to humble himself under the mighty hand of God, imploring pardon through the redemption that is in the blood of the Lamb, and expecting it freely, as the most sovereign mercy that a poor sinner can receive—Alas, alas! even then shame and confusion cover his face. He desires to keep his thoughts from wandering—he would have his whole heart engaged in the duty, but he cannot. His imagination is not to be restrained. When he would be uniting all his affections in fervent and effectual prayer—vain, foolish thoughts force themselves upon him: he drives them away as Abraham did the birds which came down upon the sacrifice, but they will return. He mourns, as well he may, for these distractions of his mind; and is deeply convinced, that a most holy God might justly condemn him for his very best devotions. He is therefore led to put them into the hands of the Mediator, that he may perfume them with much of his

incense for their acceptance, and through his intercession, and through that only, he may obtain an answer of grace.

Neither can he trust in his praises any more than in his prayers. Let him praise ever so much, and ever so well, yet he can make no suitable acknowledgments for the blessing of creation. Once he was nothing: for his being at all—for such a being, rather than any other—for being made a man, and at first highly favoured with the image and friendship of God—who can express the noble acts of the Lord, or show forth all his praise for the miracle of creation? But who can conceive how great, how endless are the blessings of the new creation? For they are all gifts of God's grace—distinguishing and sovereign—given to sinners as sinners—to the chief of sinners—continued to the unworthy—increased to the unthankful—how great in their nature—how invaluable the sum of them! The believer, deeply impressed with these sentiments, acknowledges that he is less than the least of all God's mercies; yea, he is sensible that he deserves the heaviest of the divine vengeance: so that his prayer, "God be merciful to me a sinner," lays the foundation of his very best praises. He who has most forgiven will love most. He who feels what he really is among the chief of sinners, will be among the chief of those worshippers who ascribe all their salvation to God and the Lamb. The humblest among them will feel that they have most reason to be thankful. But still their praises are no payment. They must receive fresh grace to praise with, and more grace to praise better. The debt increases by the addition

of fresh gifts of grace, and leaves the believer nothing to glory in but the Lord—to be saved—to feel it—to enjoy it by faith—to be made, and to be kept thankful, giving all the glory where it is due: —these are among the mercies which endure for ever.

In this school of self-abasement he is taught to be humbled for his short attainments in the Scriptures, read, or preached, or meditated on. How seldom does he attend the word as that congregation did—"Behold, we are all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God." This preparation of heart was from the Lord. He disposed Cornelius and his family to receive the word aright, and his blessing came upon them in hearing it; for while Peter was speaking, the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the word. And it would be so still, if there was the same dependence on his grace, and the prayer of faith for his teaching along with the word. How little is this depended upon under hearing, although the profit be entirely from him! how seldom is the mixing faith with it received and acknowledged! Therefore the memory keeps little impression of the word, and in heart it is not fruitful as it ought to be. On all these accounts the believer mourns and is humbled before God. He feels it to be true, "I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good, I find not." He is sensible of these failings and distractions, even when he labours to be most free from them. He is going to the Lord's table to be fed and feasted, hoping that he is one with Christ, and Christ is one with him. He would

gladly partake of the fruits and blessings of this union by communion with Christ, by receiving the bread of life, and the cup of salvation, according to Christ's holy institution. He comes in faith to eat the flesh of Christ, and to drink his blood in grateful remembrance of him—according as he hath been taught—The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for me, preserve my body and soul unto eternal life—I take and I eat this bread, and I take and I drink this cup, in remembrance that Christ died for me, and I desire to feed on him in my heart by faith with thanksgiving. In this service he would have his whole soul engaged, that nothing might interrupt his communion with his beloved. But vain thoughts which lodge within him, will break out. They intrude, although most unwelcome guests, into this banquet of love: so that he is constrained to cry out, Lord Jesus, pardon the failings of my holy things: I come to the throne of thy grace, that I may obtain mercy, and may find more grace to help me in every time of need.

When he is led to consider what is the cause of all these failings, O what an abiding lesson of humility has he to learn! He sees that they all spring from the bitter root of unbelief, and are the fruits of remaining corruption; which can only be kept down, and conquered, as the strength of Christ apprehended by faith prevails over them. Self, pride, legality, nurse them: they have their being, their activity, their power, from those fleshly lusts which war against the soul, and render the whole life of the believer one continued act of self-denial. He has still a body of sin, with all its members mixing

with every duty, so that he cannot ground his faith and hope upon the best of them. The work of Jesus upon earth, the intercession of Jesus in heaven, are the sole ground of his confidence towards God. His motive is good—he aims at pleasing God in all things—he would do his will, and suffer his will, as it is his bounden duty, with faith and patience. His end is good—he would gladly keep the glory of God in his eye, and direct all he does to it, as his elder brethren do in heaven. But he cannot. When the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak. Yet he is not so discouraged as to give over and cease his approaches to God, because of his infirmities. Having obtained help of God, he fights on the good fight of faith. He does not leave off praying, because he is not so spiritual as he desires to be; but he is rather more earnest and fervent. The Spirit helping his infirmities, keeps him in an humble dependence upon Jesus, waiting on him for due sense of his wants, for the acceptance of his prayers, for a supply of them, for pardoning the failings of them, for more faith in them, and for enabling him to continue instant in prayer, according to the divine command, that men ought always to pray and not to faint; which supposes them to be kept in a praying frame, and to use the means which St. Jude recommends for the obtaining of these blessings: "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."

As he is not weary of his prayers, because they are not so spiritual as he could wish, so neither is he

weary of his praises, although they fall far short of what such a Saviour deserves, and of what he would acknowledge with all possible gratitude: because he falls short, he aims higher. He feels himself under infinite obligations to the Father for his love, to the Son for his salvation; and by the supply of the Spirit's grace he is made sensible, that he is not only less than the least of divine mercies, but if he had his just deserts, he should have judgment without mercy. This lays the foundation for his highest praises. The faithful witness for Jesus makes the believer willing to be beholden to him for every mercy; yea, to glory in being a pensioner upon his fulness; from which he receives grace for grace, that in all things he may be giving of thanks: according to the Lord's favour to his people, informing them to take with them words, and turn to the Lord, and say unto him, "Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously, so will we render the calves of our lips;" which is the sacrifice of the New Testament worshippers, who, through Jesus the Mediator, offer the sacrifice of praise continually—that is, the fruit of their lips, giving thanks to his name: wishing, praying to do it with some of the praises of heaven; as one said, "I will hope continually, and I will yet praise thee more and more."

As these prayers and praises are grounded upon faith in the divine promises, this makes the believer a diligent reader of the Scriptures. He does not neglect his Bible, because he has not yet attained the perfect knowledge of every part of it. For that very reason he studies it more; he prays more over it, grows more thankful for the divine power which

humble in the use of the means: and thus he learns to live more by faith upon Christ, and to seek more close communion with him and his fulness, especially at his table. He does not absent himself from it, because he has not the fellowship there, so close, intimate, and abiding as he could wish, or because the last time he was there he was not so lively as he used to be, or because he was unworthy, and full of complaints. He has tasted that the Lord is gracious, and this taste has increased his hunger and thirst: the food which he wants he does not carry with him, but he goes to receive it. When he hears his Lord's command—Take, eat this bread—drink this cup—do ye this in remembrance of me,—he obeys, believing the promise: This is my body given for you; this is my blood shed for you. The more faith in the promise, there will be the more appetite, and the more nourishment received from the spiritual food; for then the Holy Spirit puts his influence into the elements, and the communicant eats the flesh of Christ indeed, and drinks his blood indeed; having by faith communion with him in the bread and wine. At this table the believer is fed, nourished, and feasted, with the bread that cometh down from heaven, even angel's food. For he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever; according to the Lord's own promise, "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day." The believer has this in his eye, both in what the banquet is now, and in what it is the pledge and earnest of, when it shall be realized. Faith gives a substance to the things promised and hoped for. It has the earnest and the

neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest." And he went out strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. He fought the Lord's battles and prospered, until the whole land was subdued before him. There failed not ought of any good thing which the Lord had spoken to the house of Israel—all came to pass. Even so shall it be to the whole Israel of God. Every good soldier of Christ Jesus shall be kept safe by his almighty power, and under his banner shall fight the good fight of faith, until he obtain the promised inheritance, which is incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for them. He has taken possession of it in their name, as their surety, and not one of them can perish; for he keeps the inheritance for them, and them for it: yea, the day is hastening on, when he will present all his redeemed unto the Father. "Of those whom thou hast given me have I lost none; behold I, and the children whom thou hast given me."

On all these accounts it is evident, that a believer every day, and in every thing, finds matter for the deepest humiliation. He has still a body of sin, remaining corruptions, daily infirmities, and shortcomings. All that he has of his own abases him in his own eyes; so that his triumph is never in himself. His salvation, with all its graces and blessings, depends entirely upon what he is in Christ. On this foundation he may rest safely always, notwithstanding he has nothing of his own to glory in. Most of his mistakes and miseries come from his seeking to be independent of Christ—hoping to find that in himself, or in the world, which is only in

boast of: yet even in this continual warfare between the flesh and the Spirit, in Christ Jesus he may rejoice even to a triumph, a jubilee of joy. But the grand triumph is yet to come. The best glorying in the Lord here is only a prelude to it. Now we have the espousals with our heavenly Bridegroom, but then the marriage will be consummated. Now we are kept waiting in hope for the crown of righteousness, but that will be our coronation day. What a day will it be! What wonders and miracles! The promises, exceeding great and exceeding precious, will then have their full and everlasting accomplishment by a faithful God, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them who have believed. When they shall see him face to face—shall be with him where he is—shall be like him, and made capable of enjoying the honours, and riches, and pleasures of his kingdom, in their fulness of blessedness for evermore.

CHAPTER XI.

The Eternal Triumph.

This is the great lesson which the believer is learning, till he comes to the end of his faith—what is promised him, and what he hopes to be at the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the centre to which all his experience tends; and, while he keeps it in view, it so enlivens and animates his prospect, that come what may, he goes on his way